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REDPATH:

—OR,—

THE WESTERN TRAIL.

A Story of Frontier Life and Adventure.

By DR. J. H. ROBINSON.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH THE HERO MAKES HIS BOW TO THE READER.

It was night on the western prairies, and the stars were glowing silvery and soft in the azure arch. The gauzy spray of clouds sailing at intervals across the quiet heavens, obscured not the mild lustre of the moon, nor cast a shadow upon the wilderness.

A youth of slender figure, clad in garb befitting the hunter and backwoodsman, was standing with meditative brow upon a gentle eminence, leaning gracefully upon his rifle, which was of approved make and studied finish. His features, though not strongly masculine in mould, were not uncomely, nor without the prestige of thought. His maturity of expression was notably in contrast with his otherwise youthful *personnel*. His eyes were somewhat dreamy, impressing the physiognomist with the idea that his imagination dwelt in a world vague and impractical, far removed from the scenes of this but too real sphere.

Below him, at the base of the hill, the waters of Kansas River were flowing; while at his left the distant peaks of the Rocky Mountains were visible, towering in their stern, unchanging grandeur like everlasting guardians of the north —an army of eternal occupation, which the might of finite man can never conquer; upon his right, prairies unfolded their scenery like an endless panorama, diversified by strips of timber, swamps of grass and shrubbery. At a short distance from the youth, the smoke of a blazing fire arose in a misty column, forming numberless fantastic wreaths and phantom shapes. A solitary figure was stretched beside the burning fagots, sleeping as soundly, apparently, as if domiciled beneath a sheltering roof, and couched upon the softest bed. The youth approached the spot at the sound of his footsteps the man sprang to his feet, casting quick, sharp glances around him. In a moment his gaze was fastened upon the intruder, and he relaxed his guarded watchfulness. With his raven eyes he scanned the object that had excited his attention, with stronger indications of contempt than curiosity, or alarm. The youth advanced, and begging pardon for the intrusion, expressed a hope that he had not disturbed his dreams, or awakened his fears.

The person to whom these words were addressed, smiled, and turning his back partially toward the youth, replied rather sarcastically, that he seldom took the trouble to dream; as for fear, Ben Brion was a stranger to it, and had certainly seen nothing to excite such an emotion for a long time. He trusted he had too long been a sojourner in the west to be terrified at trifles. He then stroked his beard, shrugged his shoulders, and smiled again. The young man doubtless understood the stranger's meaning, but without appearing to notice it, added that if his company would not be considered particularly disagreeable, he would venture to take a seat by the fire, which seemed to him very cheerful and inviting.

The individual who had styled himself Ben Brion, replied that he was at liberty to please himself in that respect, though he fancied that a stuffed chair, or a feather bed, would agree better with his constitution than any accommodation he could offer. The youth answered to the effect that he was not fastidious; that a blazing fire would suffice for a night so serene and tranquil. He seated himself, placed his rifle on the ground beside him, and instead of turning his attention to Brion, resumed his study of the heavens with an abstracted air.

At first, Brion scarcely deigned to notice the stripling; but presently condescended to honor him with furtive glances, which, judging by the expression of his features, did not increase his esteem for his visitor. He obviously considered him too poor in experience to be entitled to any considerable share of attention from one who had grown ripe in adventure, and won his knowledge of the western wilds through much hardship and danger.

The sturdy trapper and mountaineer is prone to pride himself not a little on his skill and powers of endurance, and to regard the unsuccessful, ineffective and uninitiated in his wandering, perilous life, with other feelings than respect or admiration. Brion might well draw comparisons and measure his physical manhood with the youth, inasmuch as his person was not wanting in masculine development or athletic grace. In external appearance the two were quite at variance, presenting scarcely an observable feature of similarity. The difference to a third party would have been very marked.

At that period there was much rivalry existing between the various organized fur companies, which often led to the most lamentable results. The parties kept a jealous watch of each other, resorting to all the unmanly arts of low cunning to mislead, baffle and injure a rival enterprise. These wars of interest were in continual operation, ultimating not unfrequently in bloody rencontres and terrible reprisals. Being in the employ of the American Fur Company, Brion, not unnaturally, began to feel suspicious of the youth, and query whether he was not in the employ of the adverse confederacy—a spy on his movements, perchance. This conjecture was not calculated to abate his prejudices, as may be imagined, because opposition was then raging with great bitterness, aggravated by mutual acts of hostility. It was a very important season for those who were ambitious, to profit by the hunter's craft. It was early in May, and the trapping campaign was about to open. The rival associations were hurrying to the rivers and lakes where game abounded, each nervously anxious to outstrip the other, and obtain all the advantages of a choice of ground; and with that object in view took every conceivable means to conceal their own movements, and deceive and retard the opposite interest.

Brion, having tarried at Fort Leavenworth to complete some necessary transaction relating to the American Fur Company, was then proceeding to join the band, which had started several days in advance. Being made acquainted with these particulars, the reader will be able to form a tolerably correct idea of the trapper's position, and the train of thoughts the appearance of the youth, under such circumstances, would be likely to awaken. We must do him the justice to remark that he was not innately inclined to be discourteous or suspicious; but long experience in the ways and wiles of antagonistic parties, had rendered him keenly awake to strategy and covert dealing. Distrust, once aroused, is apt to thrive on petty occasions and grow stronger; and possibly it was thus with the trapper. He examined the stripling more in detail; but despite his unfriendly doubts, was forced to acknowledge to his conscience, that he could see nothing that savored of evil in his comely face. He had serious thoughts of detaining him, however, with or without his consent, and by adroit cross questioning, or positive menace, draw forth his purpose.

But the next moment he was ready to blush for planning such a violation of wild wood hospitality. He simply concluded to watch his visitor, and if he shared the comforts of the fire during the night (which he seemed disposed to do), he would take such steps to fathom his object as his judgment might suggest. With this intention, he stretched himself upon his blanket. For a short time he kept his face turned toward the youth. Anon his sight grew unsteady; the stranger became confused with the fire, the trees, the shadows in the background, the skies and the stars; and so Brion sank into an undisturbed slumber.

Upon awaking in the morning, his first impulse was to look for the youth; but he was not there. Near the spot where the trapper had slept was a dead rattlesnake, which he must have killed before departing. He had left a mark of good will, Brion could not but confess. The serpent might have wounded him fatally while he slept, had not the friendly offices of the youngster prevented such a catastrophe.

His simple morning meal despatched, he caught his horse (which had been side-lined, and allowed to feed upon the newly-grown grass at the distance of a hundred yards from his bivouac) and resumed his way in a western direction toward the Platte or Nebraska River. Three days passed without bringing any notable adventure to the sturdy mountaineer. On the afternoon of the fourth he saw a traveller approaching, mounted upon a large sorrel horse, the proportions and movements of which were not calculated to impress the observer with a very high opinion of his qualities. The animal was of ample size, but presented various bony outlines and angles, seemingly indicative of scarcity of forage, or constitutional marasmus. The man riding this unprepossessing beast, is worthy a passing description.

His garb was strikingly fantastic, and would have appeared to prevailing taste very incongruous, being made up of an old mixture of savage and civilized apparel. He was of low stature, but of singularly masculine development, broad shoulders and prominent chest. His face had a good-humored expression despite the swamp of beard that covered it, and the elk-skin cap drawn low upon his brow. There was the prestige of fun in his small eyes, which had a constant twinkle. His rifle was slung across his back by a leather strap. When within fifty rods of Ben Brion, he raised a loud war-whoop and put his beast to a gallop, performing a series of Indian evolutions with ludicrous effect. He made two circles around the mountaineer at a full run, clinging to the farther side of the animal, and peering over his back as if reconnoitering in true aboriginal style, shouting and yelling.

To humor his whim, Brion dismounted and rested his rifle on the pommel of his saddle to receive him with the precaution due to his assumed character. The stranger gradually drew near, and the parties with proper formality saluted, and extended the hand of friendship. Many such meetings transpire on the wide prairies of the West. Whatever feeling of distrust Brion was disposed to harbor at first, gave place to geniality when he learned that his new acquaintance was not connected with any organized fur company, but prided himself in belonging to that roving, independent class, known as free trappers, whose homes were the mountains and prairies, and whose pleasure was the excitement of danger.

Buckeye—such was the rover's name—was in good spirits, and enlivened the way by his witticisms and strange tales. At nightfall they encamped together quite amicably, Brion taking considerable pains to enlist Buckeye in his brigade of hunters; but he intimated that he preferred liberty to the gold and authority of a partisan leader.

Another serene evening followed. Unable to sleep, Brion left his hard couch to contemplate the starry beauties of the night, and muse upon the arduous duties upon which he was entering. The placid skies, the mellow light, the murmur of glistening waters, addressed his consciousness like pleasant voices. While yielding to the soothing influences around him, and gazing dreamily at the varied aspects, Brion fancied he heard a slight movement in a group of young poplars at his right. Disciplined in a school of severest watchfulness, he was alive to sounds inaudible to unpractised ears. He advanced cautiously toward the spot whence the noise proceeded. He imagined, as he parted the branches of the trees, and stepped into the thicket, he caught a vague glance of an object in rapid motion beyond the bushes, deeper in the shadow. It might have been a human figure, or it might have been but the reflection of a cloud thrown transiently upon the open space. With his rifle ready for instant use, Brion moved forward. On the margin of the wood he paused and examined the locality. He was much surprised at finding an Indian hatchet sticking into a tree near him. He drew it forth; the handle was yet warm from the belt of its owner. A minute had not elapsed, obviously, since it had been hurled into the yielding bark. The mountaineer looked for a fresh trail, but was for some time unsuccessful, until going farther from the tree, he found a spot where the grass was bent, as if pressed by a human foot. He followed the trail for a few rods, when it suddenly ceased; he could trace it no farther.

The circumstance perplexed Brion greatly; for his skill in tracing a trail amounted almost to instinct. Ascending a ridge close at hand, he scanned the country on either side as far as he could see, but without making any additional discovery. He returned to his camp fire thoughtful. Buckeye was sleeping, and "Flash," his horse, was standing close by him, with ears erect and vigilant. Trained, like his master, to a life of peril, like him he had learned watchfulness. Some sound had reached him to excite his fears or curiosity, and put him on the alert.

"Faithful creature!" mused Brion. "Experience has quickened his senses, and made him little inferior to reasoning beings."

The partisan (the leaders of those enterprises were thus called) awaked the trapper and related what had occurred. Buckeye stirred the fire, took a bite of tobacco, rubbed his forehead, and gave signs of uneasiness.

"There's a great difference in carcumstances," quoth he, sagely. "Some things are easy to explain, and some isn't."

When he had expressed this sentiment, he aimed a jet of dark colored extract at a blazing brand. "Flash," hearing his master's well-known voice, came up and placed his nose on his shoulder, as if soliciting companionship.

"The cretur knows me, stranger, and is restless when I'm a good way off. We couldn't part, Flash and I couldn't. 'Twould be a sorry day for both of us if he should change owners. But I hope that'll never be. 'Twould break his heart to have a redskin back him. But that's nothing to do with the subject; and as I said afore, in different words, some matters are mighty mysterious, and hard to get at understandingly. There's strange characters in this wild kentry, and one don't allers know what's arter him. The natural reptiles of the sile have a heap of cunnin', and it's never safe to shet both eyes at night. We're tracked; that's evident enough; but by whom, is another question. There's danger at our backs, but which of us two is spoke for, I can't say. I'll tell you more about it arter we've passed Fort Laramie; that is, if we both should be alive then."

"It would be well to move off, leaving our fire burning, I suppose," returned Brion. "It is our duty to be reasonably cautious and careful of life. There's a scriptural injunction laid upon us to be wise as serpents."

"If a parson had said that it couldn't have been more to the pint. I know of a very quiet campin' ground a few miles farther on, where I passed a night some months ago when the hesthen reptiles had somehow got wind of my movements."

The parties mounted their horses, and the fire where they had anticipated passing an undisturbed night, was soon far behind. The spot referred to by Buckeye proved a fitting place for their purpose, being sheltered by large rocks and trees, and hemmed in by a crescent-shaped bend in the river.

Brion felt at home. The wide sky arching over him in unveiled beauty, with its starry hosts; the spreading prairies, the distant mountains, the running waters and fluttering leaves, were things that had voices, and addressed him with pleasant language. The mountaineer was entirely satisfied with his mode of life. He felt no desire to be other than he was. There was a charm (for him) in the atmosphere of the wilderness; and the certainty of danger added a new zest, making him more in love with his calling. Like Buckeye, he had been a free trapper, but the strong inducement held out to him by the American Fur Company had (after considerable hesitation and rather against his independent predilections) caused him to accept the post of "partisan," or leader of the enterprise. He knew it was a trying and difficult position, but trusted that he should be able by his experience in trapping and hunting to give satisfaction to all concerned.

When he resumed his way on the ensuing morning, the glowing stories of Buckeye, concerning the pleasures and excitement of a free trapper's existence, made him half regret his engagement. Before noon he overtook the band, consisting of about seventy-five men, amply provided with pack horses and mules.

"I want no sich creturs as them," said Buckeye, pointing to the latter, with a contemptuous expression. "And as for baggage, a real trapper needs nothin' but his gun, huntin' knife and traps. Them men are slaves to their mules and packs. No, no! I couldn't think of sich a life! Give me Flash and this trusty weapon, and the sky for my roof, and the prairie for my floor, with nobody to dictate what I shall or sha'n't do, and I ask no more."

With this pithy epitome of his sentiments, Buckeye shouted "Hi! hi!" performed some difficult feats of horsemanship, then abating somewhat of his equestrian fury, joked the slow paced brigade unmercifully, contrasting their encumbered march with his own untrammelled, unburdened movements. In Brion's estimation, there was too much truth in such badinage to make it altogether agreeable to the moderately moving party. Flash, in return, received criticisms not complimentary to himself or his master; but which were borne by the latter with perfect equanimity.

We cannot here make the reader acquainted with the various individuals of which the band was composed. There were French and half-breeds, a few of Mexican origin, the greater number being Americans from frontier towns. There was also a Texan adventurer, a Kentuckian, a Virginian, and a young fellow from Massachusetts. Many were veteran trappers, while some were fresh on the prairies, unpractised in the arts and expedients of hunter life. Thus far on their march all had gone well. The Indians had not molested them, and grass being abundant, the horses and mules were in good condition. The young and unschooled in the kind of existence opening before them, feared they should reach the distant theatre of operations without incident or excitement, or adventures worth relating when they should again reach home; but the wiser heads shrugged their shoulders, intimating very plainly that danger might come before they were ready for it.

They passed Fort Laramie with nothing to break the monotony of their march. The jubilant spirits of the younger men began to flag; continued travel had already taken the first starch of greenness out of them. Seeing how smoothly things were proceeding, they grew less vigilant, ridiculed the precautions of Brion, wishing for an opportunity to "show the redskins what they could do," boasting in no measured terms of their ability to teach them civility. Buckeye, who continued with the band, heard all this bravado in silence, feeling more inclined to feed their vanity than to rebuke their folly.

One morning, one of those who had been loudest in his threats, and had sneered most at the nightly cautions of Brion, was missed from camp. Believing that he would soon return, no uneasiness was felt on his account; but not making his appearance, several of his friends started to look for him. After a short search, his lifeless body was found a few rods from the encampment. It had no wound—no sign of mortal injury visible to casual eyes; yet the animating spirit had gone! The thoughtless braggarts at first were shocked, supposing their comrade had met his death by violence, but discovering no external hurt, they changed their minds, and concluded he had died a natural death.

"What do you call a natural death?" asked Buckeye.

A young Missourian, by the name of Headley, replied that he supposed apoplexy might be thus called.

"If it's apoplexy, then apoplexy's a catchin' disease, and more'n one of ye'll be down with it afore you reach the trappin' grounds," said Buckeye, mysteriously.

"You are not talking to boys, but to men!" retorted the Missourian, loftily.

"I'm glad you've told me, for I shouldn't have mistrusted it," was the instant rejoinder.

"It's plain enough to any one in his senses that this man died of a disease of the heart or brain. What else could kill him? I see no wounds nor bruises, or any signs of a struggle; and you'll find it hard to crowd your mysterious nonsense down our throats in the way you think."

"Since you're so wise, it aint worth while to tell ye anythin' more, because it might hurt ye. I've knowed folks to be injured by knowin' too much. An acquaintance of mine was 'bliged to take to his bed jest on account of his general information," answered Buckeye, with quiet sarcasm.

A grave was dug beneath a spreading poplar, in which the body was decently interred. The earth was smoothed, and a fire built over the spot to prevent the resting-place of the mortal remains from being disturbed by the natives. During the day's march there was considerable discussion relative to the man's decease, but Brion, Buckeye, and a few others, studiously avoided the topic. The latter had already rendered himself unpopular by the singular opinion he had advanced relative to the subject. He had lost among a certain class who had previously been disposed to think highly of his wisdom and experience, that repute which he had gained for shrewdness among them. They doubted his mental soundness, regarding him as weak and superstitious. Where before his presence had been welcome, he was now met with coldness and ridicule. Sneers, covert jokes, and unfriendly innuendoes, passed from mouth to mouth at his expense.

Such demonstrations the sturdy trapper did not deign to notice. He smoked his pipe calmly, conversed with the veterans of the brigade, praised the good qualities of Flash, and made occasional reconnoitering excursions in advance. It was remarked by the more observing that Brion was more thoughtful and taciturn than usual, though they could very naturally attribute the fact to the circumstance of the recent death.

The next camp was chosen with particular care, and unwonted precautions were had in

setting a guard. The latter, two in number, were relieved at midnight, when Headley and one of his friends took their places, with instructions to be vigilant. The Missourian heard Brion's orders with manifest impatience, and demanded to know if he supposed this was his first experience on the prairies of the West.

"You may have had some experience in the border towns," said the mountaineer, mildly, "but you have not yet grown gray with the visissitudes of a hunter's life. You're in a region now, where one hour is no type of what the next will be. Things unexpected happen here. There are seventy-four of us, well, and in fighting condition; but in the morning it isn't impossible that one may be missed from the number of his mess. I have known a band like this to be routed and scattered in a single night."

The Missourian turned his back upon Brion, and made no reply.

The following morning proved cloudy and dark, therefore favorable to repose; a circumstance of which the weary adventurers availed themselves by sleeping soundly to a later hour than they had been accustomed. Brion at length aroused them, and the camp was soon astir with active preparations for cooking. Headley was found sleeping near the fire, and being awakened by the clatter around him, assured Buckeye, with a sinister smile, that he had escaped the disease, called apoplexy, in a wonderful manner. The former glanced quickly over the groups of men, replying that he hoped it had fared as well with his comrade. Some one said:

"Let's ask him. Where is he?"

"Safe enough, I'll warrant," said Headley.

Several voices called to the party referred to. At that moment Brion came up to the group with a very grave face.

"Little good will it do to call him—he'll never answer to human call again!" he said, in a low, measured tone.

Every face was fixed on the partisan's in an instant.

"Billy Minten is gone!" he added.

"Gone where?" asked Headley.

"Where we're all going, my men—to the great nation of the dead!" he answered, sadly.

The Missourian's checks paled, while the hunters and trappers gazed at each other in silence.

"His body lies yonder; he fell at his post. And perhaps," he continued, looking steadily at Headley, "some of you can tell what he died of?"

"A disease of the head or heart," muttered Buckeye, loud enough for Headley to hear.

Brion's men now gathered about the remains of the unfortunate young man, seeking vainly for the wound that sped him hence. Evidently he had fallen where he had last stood, stricken mortally, nor had moved a limb thereafter. His immortal part had been dismissed from his corporeal tabernacle without a struggle or painful contortion. The face was as calm as if he slept; the lips were closed, as were the eyes, expressing no dread or horror, or consciousness of suffering; and the ghastliness of death was not written upon any of the features.

When this spectacle first presented, an interval of silence followed; which anon gave place to hurried queries no one could (or would) answer. Conjecture became rife, and speculation and hypothesis united to solve the mystery. Buckeye, Brion, and other veterans in woodcraft stood aloof. Headley, who made pretensions to some knowledge of surgery, conducted the examination of the body, assisted by others of his sympathizers. Reluctantly he relinquished the search. Perfect obscurity covered the case; a truth he was loth to admit, for he prided himself on his perspicacity.

"Well, sir, what are your conclusions?" said the partisan, as Headley turned away and passed the spot where he was standing.

"There is no evidence that he died of violence—not the least. It is a puzzling case; but his sudden decease must be attributed to some hereditary predisposition to—"

A low laugh from Buckeye interrupted the speaker, and sent the blood to his face in a manner indicative of considerable excitement.

"Go on," said the partisan, quietly.

"Not another word!" exclaimed Headley. "Upon some people common sense is thrown away, and sound reason, predicated on experience, is just so much Greek. Superstition and ignorance go together, sir!"

A slight smile curled Brion's lips for a moment, while Buckeye stroked his long beard and shrugged his shoulders, according to his habit.

"You decide, if I understand you, Mr. Headley, that Minten died by some lurking disease, which came to a sudden and fatal crisis last night!" resumed the partisan.

The Missourian bowed stiffly.

"You do not care to be explicit, I see?"

"Congestion of the brain, perhaps," replied Headley, ill humoredly.

"Or perhaps some diffkilty about the heart?" said Buckeye, with affected humility.

Headley darted an angry look at the offender, for nothing upset his mental equilibrium so quickly as doubting his knowledge, or ridiculing his opinions. He was specially infallible in his medical wisdom, his father having been a country doctor, with a large practice. Toward Buckeye, within the last two days, he had begun to entertain a positive dislike, which threatened to go on gathering strength until it became absolute enmity and hatred. The trapper's matter-of-fact assumption of superior skill in woodcraft had in the first place piqued him; then his obstinate refusal to bow to his judgment in the inapprehensible cases of which we have been treating, completed his antipathy. As we have taken care to impress it upon the courteous reader, the younger and less experienced portion of the band sympathized with Headley, while only the veterans appeared to occupy neutral ground. Naturally superstitious, some of the trappers were ready to believe that Heaven frowned on their enterprise, and was manifesting its disapproval by the visitations of death. Gloom and discouragement settled upon the countenances of such, and they resumed their march with a sullenness that boded little good to Brion's schemes.

CHAPTER II.

THE UNKNOWN YOUTH AGAIN APPEARS.

The party moved slowly on, Brion and Buckeye remaining behind with two men to see the body of Minten consigned to its kindred elements, and all traces of the grave obliterated to prevent its subsequent exhumation by savage hands. The simple burial was soon completed. Buckeye was in the act of lighting the fagots that had been heaped on the spot by the partisan's order, when a horseman was descried approaching at a gallop. His hurried pace brought him quickly to the side of the mountaineer, who had observed his advance with a curiosity that could not be disguised. The rider was the slender youth who sought his lonely bivouac-fire on the banks of the Kanzas.

Brion felt disposed to study the young stranger closely. He noticed that his chin was guiltless of beard, his eyes large, vivacious, and sparkling, his face dark, but comely. Although clad, as has before been stated, in befitting garb, his appearance was extremely neat, and Brion thought a trifle foppish. This idea was sustained somewhat, by the fact that his feet and hands were small, the first encased in close fitting moccasons, ornamented by Indian skill, the latter covered with gloves of soft leather, long enough to reach above the wrist a third of the way to the elbow. His small, elegant rifle was fastened ingeniously to the saddle on the right side, in a manner to be instantly available when wanted. A brace of silver mounted pistols peeped from holsters at the pommel, while the handle of a dagger flashed in the sun at his slight waist.

He sat his horse with grace, and therefore with ease. And here we are brought naturally to speak of the qualities of the animal that bore the youthful rider. He was large and black as ebony, so that the mountaineer and trapper could not but admire his model proportions. Their attention was divided between the steed and his master, though too proud to confess by outward manifestation how much they were interested and puzzled, or at least not while the eyes of the youth were upon them.

"Good morning, messieurs," he said, with an accent not purely American, yet clear and very distinct.

"Yes, it is a very good morning, but I should like it better were it less cloudy," answered the partisan, with more courtesy than on a former occasion.

"I suspect we ought to be pleased with everything Providence sends; not to be so, seems like finding fault with one with whose dispensations we have no right to meddle," was the immediate rejoinder.

"I confess, good youth, that your reasoning has the savor of truth. And I am now reminded that I am probably under some obligation to you. I found near me on awaking the next morning after your visit, a dead serpent of a venomous kind, which was doubtless slain by your hand," added Brion.

"If that trifling act confess obligation, why you are right. The creature was about to do you an injury, and fortunately it was in my power to despatch him before he fixed his fangs."

"For which service I am deeply indebted. If my reception was not at that time entirely cordial, and mingled with distrust, I trust to atone for the same when opportunity shall present."

Brion spoke with some warmth and bowed quite low; for the youth, despite his slight figure and smooth face, had an air that in some strange manner commanded respect.

The stranger's horse at that moment snuffed the air with affright, trembled, reared and made a sidelong bound.

"Be quiet, Brave, be quiet, I see nothing to fear," said his master, soothingly.

"We have just buried a comrade here; it is the scent of death that terrifies him," said the partisan.

The young rider colored and backed Brave from the spot.

"Did your friend find a natural death, or did he die by Indian hostility?" he inquired.

"Indeed, sir, I will request my more experienced companion to answer your question, feeling confident that he will get nearer the truth."

"It seems to me that the matter is very simple. Certainly, the answer must be yes or no; in which case one must be entirely right or absolutely wrong."

"Ordinarily speakin', your idees would be perfectly to the pint; but in the particlar instance, you are wide the mark," said Buckeye. "The cap'n has been pleased to refer to me; but my opinion I dare say wouldn't be worth much to ye. If it wouldn't be takin' too much liberty, I'd like to ask if your friends are far from here; for I take it you aint alone, seein' you're young and inexperienced, as I may say?"

"I hope I have friends not far from me; it would make me wretched to believe to the contrary," was the evasive reply.

Prudential motives had clearly dictated Buckeye's query, and the youth appeared to comprehend his feelings.

"Being a stranger, you don't think it prudent to trust me; is it not so?"

"Well, I had such a notion, I confess," said the trapper.

"And I am too youthful in appearance to invite confidence. Come, be true to yourself! Have I not traced the workings of your mind?"

"If you never commit a greater blunder than that, you'll be a lucky lad," resumed Buckeye, with a characteristic motion of the shoulders. "But young heads," he added, "may be discreet, and a beard isn't alters necessary to make one shrewd; though judgin' by appearances, I should naterally conclude you aint a veteran in woodcraft; and your frame is not calculated to endure the hardships and fatigues of this kind of life. It isn't my business, may be, yet I'd advise ye as a friend to keep near your company."

"I'm obliged to you for your good will, and will endeavor to take care of myself," was the good-natured reply. "I see you are about to move on. I will bear you company at least for a time, to which proposal I trust you will have no objections," he added, in the same vein.

Brion felt a strong desire to know his new friend's name, purpose, and destination; but notwithstanding his situation was one to make such interrogatories proper, he did not approach the subject without considerable embarrassment that could not have escaped the observing eyes of the stranger.

"I presume," he began, "that the party to which you are attached, seek these savage regions for the sake of excitement and novelty alone?"

"Your judgment is good, my friend."

The partisan, though dissatisfied with the reply, did not give up the pursuit.

"Is your band large, sir?" he resumed.

"Not very; I will remark, too, that their interest, I think, will not to any considerable extent conflict with yours. Be good enough to drop your suspicions, and permit me to see something of that generous confidence that I have heard distinguishes the roving trapper of the West. Had I been your enemy, I should have permitted that ugly serpent to finish his work. Come, messieurs, tell me what caused the death of your comrade, whose grave is on the prairie, like a sailor's in the sea?"

These words were spoken with an ingenuous frankness that for the time passing, dispelled distrust from the mind of the mountaineer. Looking at the lad's frank face, he could not resist the conviction that his intentions were friendly, his mind void of hypocrisy.

"Forgive my reserve, good youth," said the partisan, with unaffected earnestness, pausing and extending his hand. "The life that I am at present following, is one to make me distrustful of my fellows, and seal up the warm fountains of the heart. Know, young sir, that I am the leader of an enterprise that stirs up the bitterest feelings of rivalry in certain quarters—a rivalry full of all manner of subtlety and hostility. It has not been long thus, for you must understand that I have, until recently, been no man's servant, nor tied to other interest than my own. I have been a free trapper, consulting the stars and my own convictions to govern my course; but since I accepted this leadership, I am another man. My eyes have to be in all directions. I am, in truth, a sort of a watch-dog to guard the property of others, and like that noble animal, shall be prized according to my faithfulness and the acuteness of my instincts. So much for my apparent churlishness and reserve—an explanation I have not before deigned to make even to the honest man you see at my side."

"No more, I beg of you! I know that you are the soul of generosity and honor; otherwise, the language of the face is false in its utterance."

This flattering avowal had something more than the mere wording to commend it to the partisan; the tones went directly to that spot where human friendship begins. A sense of satisfaction accompanied the youth's speech into Brion's ears, and the last lingering fragment of contempt said adieu. He straightened his figure in the saddle, and seemed ten years younger with his handsome face, free from lurking doubt, and his lips smiling through his dark beard.

"You do me too much credit, I assure you," he answered, in a genial voice, which caused the stripling to regard him with deepening attention. "But we will not dwell upon this matter longer. Common courtesy touches my elbow, reminding me that the civil question proposed by you has not been answered. You wish to know the cause of our associate's sudden decease. Let me inform you that I have buried two of our men within forty-eight hours, who bore on their persons no visible signs of violence. Various conjectures are formed in regard to the subject, the prevailing sentiment being, I think, that both died of a disease of the heart or brain. My friend Buckeye will not hesitate, I expect, to speak his mind fully and freely, and give us both the benefit of his sound judgment and experience."

The trapper mused, then looked inquiringly at the partisan, to see how far his expression invited or warranted confidence; that individual nodded to the mute interrogatory, but still Buckeye remained silent, with his eyes cast downward to the pommel of his saddle, or fixed upon the youth at his side, whose large horse bore him like a feather, apparently proud of his own strength.

"If I was to speak the truth like an honest man, as is becoming to me and all others, I should assert confidently that the two men had foul play. I'm aware how it'll seem to them that don't know what I do, and never heard the name of Redpath."

The youth turned an eager, searching look on the trapper.

"Stop, my friend," he said, "and allow me to interrupt you by asking, who is Redpath?"

"Ask anything you please, sir—ask what makes the grass grow, or the heart beat, or the sun shine? Such questions might be commonplace enough, and under some circumstances no doubt very proper; but answering them is another affair."

"You mean to say that Redpath is a mysterious personage, whom you know only by his deeds, or what is more probable, by hearsay."

"Hearsay comes very near to it, but don't quite cover the whole ground. I have seen effects that were attributed to the one I named, by those who had more knowledge of him than I Redpath is the enemy of the white man, the sworn foe of the trapper and hunter. Where are his haunts, and what does he look like, will be asked? He is in the lonely defiles, on the mountains, in the forests, upon the wide prairies. He is one as gives no warnin' of his approach. He comes and goes with the speed of an eagle on the wing; makes a swoop, strikes the pale-face with the shaft of death, and is away. He can't be trailed, he can't be followed, he can't be brought within the range of the double sights. He finds a band like the cap'n's; he dogs it, he lungs upon it in the front, in the rear; yet nobody knows where he is, or what brings death upon 'em, or what power directs the hidden bolt. Where did I hear all this? you'll next want to know. By the dim watch fires of the wandering hunter, in the camp of the trapper, from the mouths of old voyagers, from the lips of fearless adventurers, daring mountaineers, and in the wigwams of friendly Indians."

The cheeks of the unknown youth grew pale, and the partisan's brow wore a sombre expression during Buckeye's singular recital. He first observed them both attentively, as if to satisfy himself of the sincerity of one, and to learn how much of the incredible tale was credited by the other who had the prestige of a strong mind above the vagaries of superstition.

"What is your opinion of all this?" the stranger asked, addressing Brion.

The latter colored and appeared disposed to evade the home question, afraid either of being accused of weakness, or shrinking from speaking his honest convictions. His confusion did not pass unnoticed.

"I am ready to confess that I have often heard the name of Redpath up in the mountain yonder. The trappers were wont to talk of him in low tones over their night-fires and buffalo-humps. He is supposed to be a bold and cunning savage of great personal strength, who spends his life in avenging some real or fancied wrong. That his doings are exaggerated, is very probable, and yet the being called Redpath is dangerous. You may consider him fabulous; you may even smile at my seriousness, and pity my credulity."

"And so you conclude Redpath slew your men?"

There was a trifle of irony in the stranger's tones that did not escape Brion's notice.

"I have not yet admitted that, I believe."

"It was I who affirmed it," said Buckeye.

"One admission which you made you have evidently forgotten; you stated clearly that there were no marks of violence on the bodies!"

Buckeye was embarrassed by the cross questioning of his new acquaintance; to gain time as well as to hide his momentary confusion, he helped himself to a generous quid of tobacco. Like most men, he was afraid of ridicule, and that, in fact, was about the only thing he feared in the world.

"I know it has a curis look at first, but a fact is a fact, and nothin' can change it. You see he has the knack of doin' it in a strange way."

"I should think so."

"I reckon it wont make no great difference what you think!" retorted Buckeye, frowning.

"Not the slightest; but it is a very mysterious tale you have been telling, and you must pardon a little natural doubt on my part. If you scowl thus, I shall leave you."

The trapper said to himself, "It wont be a great loss."

"A story after making the circuit of the Rocky Mountains, must necessarily be full grown when it gets here," the unknown added.

"And I dare say you'll get to be a man when you have gone half that distance!" Buckeye rejoined, with a spice of sarcasm.

It was now the youth's turn to be confused; he reddened to the eye-brows, while the trapper congratulated himself on his lucky hit.

"Be steady, Brave," said the youth; an admonition seemingly quite useless, as Brave was at that instant as docile as he could possibly be.

"To be killed," suddenly resumed the young man, rallying, "one must inevitably receive injuries of some kind—either wounds or bruises—something to leave tangible marks upon the person. Tell me, now, is there not some reason in this logic?"

"O too much," replied Buckeye, sullenly.

"Pardon, sir," continued the other, addressing Brion, "you have interested me very much in this wonderful relation. Really, do you believe in this savage vampire—this *Gian Ben Gian* of the prairies?"

"No more than what I am constrained to. We may injure ourselves as much by believing too little as in believing too much. Danger that is apprehended is in a measure guarded against. Though young in years, your intelligent face assures me that you understand the force of my last remark."

"Do you fear this inexplicable enemy of the pale faces?"

Whatever fault this question might have, it did not lack explicitness. The hot blood flew to Brion's face in an instant, and he turned a proud, rebuking face upon the questioner.

"Your extreme youthfulness," he said, with dignified severity, "induces me to overlook the—the—impertinence of your question."

"I have offended."

"And I have forgiven."

"Thanks!"

"Speak no more of it. I shall be cautious but not cowardly. I hate cowardice—it is a species of meanness indicative of a pitiful spirit. This worthy trapper has spoken of Redpath—a personage either real or imaginary—and he has expressed his opinion freely. Not so have I. If such an one exists, it is my fixed purpose to know more of him—to unmask him—to discover if he really pursues white men with the malignity and secrecy with which the tongue of mountain rumor has charged him. I own that I have my doubts, and certain circumstances stagger and perplex me. My camp in future shall be on the alert; a prairie dog shall not be able to pass it unseen. Our enemies shall know what it is to outwit a veteran mountaineer."

Buckeye glanced at the partisan with an air of pride and satisfaction; it pleased him to reflect that such a brave, well-spoken man was a brother trapper. He cried, "Hi, hi!" to Flash, causing him to shoot ahead of his companions like an arrow. Brave laid his ears back, offended that another animal should have the audacity to pass him. Buckeye's exhilaration soon expended itself, and he allowed Brion to come up with him.

"Your horse has excellent qualities, I'm sure," the young man remarked, as Buckeye resumed his former place.

"He hasn't no equal between this and the Pacific, I reckon—no superior, sartin!"

"Sagacious and intelligent, without doubt. You call him Flash on account of his speed, perhaps?"

"Jest for that reason, Mister, and no other. He isn't so fat and sleek as some hoss-flesh I've seen, but when there's need, I know pretty near where to find him. Flash has a few tricks too, that I've learned him, e'enamost human."

Brion glanced at the stranger youth at that moment, and perceived that he was looking at the hatchet that he had taken from the tree in the manner described, and which he had carried ever since at his side or his saddle-bow. Seeing that the partisan had detected the direction of his eyes, he appeared disconcerted, and instantly turned his attention another way. The mountaineer was sagacious and quick to observe, and the circumstance, slight as it was, did not pass unnoted. A train of novel ideas began thereupon to whirl through his brain; he seemed trying to work out some kind of a problem without being able to find the proper data from which to start. Buckeye contrived to touch him on the arm, giving him a warning look that said, "Cap'n, I'm very suspicious of this little feller."

But a change had come over the partisan—the signs of the trapper were unheeded; he rode on singularly taciturn and reflective.

"Look, comrade, there's a horseman away yonder, and he's making signals!" exclaimed Buckeye, pointing toward the mountains.

"I thank you for your company, brave knights of the rifle and trap. Adieu, messieurs, adieu!"

With a neigh of joy, Brave recognized the signal to go, and sprang away with a force that made the ground tremble.

"A spy," cried the trapper, vehemently. "Say but the word, cap'n, and I'll foller and bring the young scamp back!"

"Do no such thing," said Brion, earnestly, "And what you propose is impracticable. See how he rides! Ah, my friend, you might as well chase the wind!" Buckeye gazed after the black horse and his rider with both vexation and admiration—vexed he hardly knew for what, and admiring because of the swiftness of the steed. He shook his wise head dubiously, wondering how such a silken sort of lad got so far from home, and what he was good for. Small hands and feet, a slight frame, neatly fitting garments, a smooth and comely face, were irreconcilable with his notions of woodcraft.

"I have a secret," he said, at length.

"Well!"

"It is worth knowin'."

"I should like to hear it!"

"But to-day I wont tell you. Do you know it isn't a lucky day to tell a secret? You don't, of course. I see it by your expression."

"Take even to the merriest cup, Buckeye, when shall I have your confidence?"

"To-morrow, like enough; we shall see. But here is the rear of your lazy fellows, and the very first man of them is that conceited coxcomb, Headley! I can't tolerate him, so I'll leave you; but I'll stroll into your camp before the moon is up to-night."

The trapper urged Flash to a gallop, and bounded along the almost interminable reach of prairie. His stout figure was soon but a mere speck between the plain and the horizon, still growing less and less to the eyes that followed him.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH BELLMAR AND MARIOT APPEAR.

It is needful that we make a retrograde movement, that the next advance in the line of march of our story may be more orderly and intelligible to those so obliging as to follow us in our rovings in the distant West.

Ambrose Bellmar and Pierre Mariot were residents of Westport, and partners in the fur trade, annually sending forth a brigade of trappers. The first was an elderly man, the father of a daughter who had attained to seventeen years, as well as to a degree of beauty exceedingly rare, save in the pages of romance. Pierre Mariot was the son of Jules Mariot, Monsieur Bellmar's late partner, deceased. The young man had been admitted to the house of "Bellmar & Mariot," partly on account of the friendship that Bellmar had entertained for his father, and partly because he did not wish the latter's funds withdrawn from the enterprise at a time when there was a heavy pressure in the money-market. M. Bellmar might have had other scheme in his mind, of which we may presently speak.

Pierre entered keenly into the rivalry of the trade, with fewer conscientious scruples than his predecessor. To the senior partner's credit be it written, that he had more of that which men term principle, than the junior; but Mr. Bellmar or Monsieur Bellmar—for he was a Frenchman—was avaricious, possessed of a restless, insatiate spirit of gain, which led him on step by step, encouraged by Pierre, to many acts that he feared would trouble him on his death-bed. The new fur company had injured his business; there had been a perceptible decline in his income since its organization. Such a state of things alarmed his cupidity, stimulating him to devise means to checkmate his competitors, and turn the stream of gold once more into his coffers. Strategy he had always encouraged and rewarded, when successful among his employees; but since the new association had secured the services of Ben Brion as leader of the trapping operations, he was aware that ordinary art would fail; therefore something out of the common order must be done, or the trade would languish, and be perhaps be driven, ultimately, entirely from the field that he had occupied so long, and gleaned his wealth from. Pierre Mariot, who had also heard the note of warning which this arrangement had sounded, gave evidence that he would set himself at work in earnest.

Mignon—Bellmar's daughter—was one day in the library, amusing herself, as she was wont, with her good companions, the books. She heard her father approaching, accompanied by Mariot, whose voice always admonished her of his proximity. There was a small apartment beyond, and into that Mignon went, closing the door. By the time she was seated, ready to resume her reading, Bellmar and Pierre reached the library. Mademoiselle Mignon observed that something very unusual took place, viz., Mariot shut the door and locked it, after which she heard him draw a chair near the writing desk where her father usually sat. Curiosity did not like her position as a listener, provided they conversed in a natural tone, there being no door through the apartment taken.

"You are aware, Monsieur, that our business has confounded for company much uneasiness, has exhausted its leader? Brion, you know, a man whose services we took

"Yes, the disagreeable fact I perceive that our business never check than ever, M

"Can you doubt it? done," said Pierre.

"*Ma foi!* we have not ever since those unlucky rifles. What new expedient remains

"That is a point to be out delay."

"Ah, my friend, commune with Ben Brion."

"Who knows that because that very reason that we boldness and energetic."

M. Bellmar mused.

"We are quite alone added.

Mignon, who sat directly of the door, was now listening, and without a single

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"Indians!"

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"So much!"

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draw a chair near the writing-desk where her father invariably sat. Mignon did not like her position. She was forced to be a listener, provided they conversed in their natural tones, there being no mode of egress save through the apartment taken possession of.

"You are aware, Monsieur Bellmar, that this confounded fur company that has given us so much uneasiness, has engaged Ben Brion for its leader? Brion, you will remember, is the man whose services we tried to secure?"

"Yes, the disagreeable news has reached me. I perceive that our business will sustain a severer check than ever, Monsieur Mariot."

"Can you doubt it? Something must be done," said Pierre.

"*Ma foi!* we have not ceased to do something ever since these unlucky rival companies existed. What new expedient remains?"

"That is a point to be settled by us, and without delay."

"Ah, my friend, common strategy will not do with Ben Brion."

"Who knows that better than I? It is for that very reason that we must take measures bold and energetic."

M. Bellmar mused.

"We are quite alone, I suppose?" Mariot added.

Mignon, who sat directly opposite the keyhole of the door, was now listening with eager interest, and without a single feeling of compunction.

"Entirely alone," replied Bellmar.

"We must ruin the American Fur Company!" with emphasis on the word "ruin."

"Be good enough to tell me how? my strategical resources are exhausted."

"We must break up and disorganize the party under Brion."

"You are just as far from the question, Monsieur Mariot. You do not inform me how this is to be accomplished."

"By means that may perchance startle you." Mignon shuddered, knowing that something terrible was in Mariot's mind; she knew by the tones of his voice.

"We must keep the penalties of the law in view," quoth Bellmar, wriggling in his chair.

"Law does not reach beyond Fort Leavenworth. We will employ instruments that laugh at the word law."

"Indians?"

Mignon made a slight movement.

"What was that?" asked Pierre.

"Nothing; go on; you would, you say, employ savages—at least, you mean so to be understood?"

"Yes; our enemies—they who take from me my business, are my enemies—must be awed, shocked, stunned, scattered, the survivors driven from the trapping grounds like trembling sheep."

Mariot pronounced these words with startling energy, stamping angrily upon the floor.

"There is much evil in that man," thought Mignon.

"Proceed," said the senior.

"I have told you all."

"*Foudre!*" exclaimed Bellmar, impatiently. "You have told me nothing!"

"Leave the ways and means to me, and you will have naught to regret."

Monsieur Bellmar rose and paced the floor.

"I shrink from acts of hostility," he added.

"I shrink from losing my invested capital!" retorted Mariot, in a hard, dry tone in which self was uppermost.

"Such things lay heavy on one's conscience as one grows old, Pierre," retorted Bellmar, in a deprecating way.

"It would grieve me to be obliged to withdraw my capital, and dissolve the old and respectable house of Bellmar & Mariot."

"It would be a sad blow to a man of my years, wanting as I do, your youthfulness and energy."

"Will you abandon this to me?"

"*Nous verrons!*"

"Delay will baffle my purpose; accede at once."

"You will send agents?"

"Doubtless."

"Perhaps go yourself?"

"It is possible."

"And it will cost?"

"A thousand dollars."

"So much?"

"The benefits will be tenfold. That company annihilated, we go on again as in old times, when my father lived."

"What do you propose in relation to Brion?"

"Pardon, monsieur, but I will not worry you with details. You consent?"

"You will be careful of human life? Blood on your conscience will prove a continual burden."

"Do not be uneasy. I will play my hand skilfully; but remember that I do not promise to do mischief!"

"Well, Mariot, be discreet and spend money to advantage. By the way, I have received a letter from our Indian agent, Fournier, which I will show you. It is in my pocket—no, it is in a coat that I took off yesterday. I will go for it."

"Bellmar is getting into his dotage; he is too weak, too weak!" muttered Mariot, the moment the senior left the room. "He wishes for a plan of the campaign, but I am not so stupid as to show my order of battle; it would strike him dumb, his nerves are so shattered."

"Ah," said Mignon, to herself, "you do not know who heard that remark."

"Once in receipt of my plan, he would soon betray all to Mignon. Mignon is timid, and her conscience is as sensitive to evil as mercury to the changes of temperature."

"Astute Pierre Mariot!" thought Mademoiselle Bellmar.

The senior returned with the letter, which treated in the main, of affairs of no interest to the reader; in it, however, occurred this curious passage. "The trappers and hunters, who are daily arriving at the trading-house, have much to say about that mysterious personage whom I referred to in a former letter. He is supposed, by many, to be a celebrated Blackfoot chief that bears mortal enmity to all whose faces are white. Would it not be lucky if he should cross the trail of the new company, and give them a taste of his quality? I am endeavoring to cultivate friendly relations with the Blackfeet, with a fair prospect of success. I think it would be well to send out a fresh stock of Indian finery by your next brigade, such as glass beads, ribbons, pipes. Also a lot of hunting-knives and cheap guns. But do not be too sanguine about the Blackfeet; they are a wily, cruel, intractable race in every particular, differing from their neighbors, the Nez Perces, who are a harmless, honest people, on whom we can rely in all pertaining to legitimate trade, but who cannot easily be induced to act against other companies in turning the tide of traffic to our interest."

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Monsieur Bellmar rose and paced the floor.

"I shrink from acts of hostility," he added.

"I shrink from losing my invested capital!" retorted Mariot, in a hard, dry tone in which self was uppermost.

"Such things lay heavy on one's conscience as one grows old, Pierre," retorted Bellmar, in a deprecating way.

"It would grieve me to be obliged to withdraw my capital, and dissolve the old and respectable house of Bellmar & Mariot."

"It would be a sad blow to a man of my years, wanting as I do, your youthfulness and energy."

"Will you abandon this to me?"

"*Nous verrons!*"

"Delay will baffle my purpose; accede at once."

"You will send agents?"

"Doubtless."

"Perhaps go yourself?"

"It is possible."

"And it will cost?"

"A thousand dollars."

"So much?"

"The benefits will be tenfold. That company annihilated, we go on again as in old times, when my father lived."

"What do you propose in relation to Brion?"

"Pardon, monsieur, but I will not worry you with details. You consent?"

"You will be careful of human life? Blood on your conscience will prove a continual burden."

"Do not be uneasy. I will play my hand skilfully; but remember that I do not promise to do mischief!"

"Well, Mariot, be discreet and spend money to advantage. By the way, I have received a letter from our Indian agent, Fournier, which I will show you. It is in my pocket—no, it is in a coat that I took off yesterday. I will go for it."

"Bellmar is getting into his dotage; he is too weak, too weak!" muttered Mariot, the moment the senior left the room. "He wishes for a plan of the campaign, but I am not so stupid as to show my order of battle; it would strike him dumb, his nerves are so shattered."

"Ah," said Mignon, to herself, "you do not know who heard that remark."

"Once in receipt of my plan, he would soon betray all to Mignon. Mignon is timid, and her conscience is as sensitive to evil as mercury to the changes of temperature."

"Astute Pierre Mariot!" thought Mademoiselle Bellmar.

The senior returned with the letter, which treated in the main, of affairs of no interest to the reader; in it, however, occurred this curious passage. "The trappers and hunters, who are daily arriving at the trading-house, have much to say about that mysterious personage whom I referred to in a former letter. He is supposed, by many, to be a celebrated Blackfoot chief that bears mortal enmity to all whose faces are white. Would it not be lucky if he should cross the trail of the new company, and give them a taste of his quality? I am endeavoring to cultivate friendly relations with the Blackfeet, with a fair prospect of success. I think it would be well to send out a fresh stock of Indian finery by your next brigade, such as glass beads, ribbons, pipes. Also a lot of hunting-knives and cheap guns. But do not be too sanguine about the Blackfeet; they are a wily, cruel, intractable race in every particular, differing from their neighbors, the Nez Perces, who are a harmless, honest people, on whom we can rely in all pertaining to legitimate trade, but who cannot easily be induced to act against other companies in turning the tide of traffic to our interest."

"Do you know much of this redoubtable native to which Fournier alludes?" Mariot inquired, with an earnestness that he regretted a moment after.

"By common camp gossip, only; a species of information not very reliable, friend Pierre," was the response.

"Is he not a being purely of the imagination, think you—a sort of bugbear created by some vagrant adventurer, to put tongues in motion that had been too long silent to be particular?"

"It may be thus, but it is scarcely probable. Mountaineers are shrewd, and the American free trapper has sense, and always understands what he's about."

"Do the Americans also talk of Redpath?"

"Yes, *mon ami*. I conversed with one Buckeye, a genuine type of the free trapper class, that has a firm belief in such a personage."

"Well, there is nothing marvellous in the fact that an Indian chief should be revengeful, spurred on as he may be by a burning sense of wrong."

"It is not that which excites alarm; it is the manner of his vengeance, the terrible mystery that hangs over his movement, his wondrous silence and secrecy, his astonishing power of eluding pursuit, his fearful perseverance."

"You speak earnestly, Monsieur Bellmar."

"Not earnestly, but to the point."

And then the senior added:

"Our rivals are making strong efforts to fill up their brigade. They will soon be ready for the western trail."

"I must be three weeks in advance of them; that is, my agent must. I will dog them with such influences—"

"Go on, sir."

"As—as shall greatly surprise them," he resumed, in a voice much modified, and with a smile.

"This is a quiet place to make confidential arrangements," he continued, looking about him with a satisfied air. "I may wish to be closeted here at this hour to-morrow, to confer with some good friends of ours. And now I think I am commissioned to look after our own mutual interests. It is getting late—I must meet an appointment."

The parties arose and left the library, while Mignon remained in her chair, like one very much startled and confounded. She had satisfied herself long before that Pierre Mariot was a man of a low standard of morality, but she was not prepared to believe him so much a villain as he had proved himself. He was meditating crime—scheming the ruin of others—planning deeds of hell—drawing her father into the vortex of his evil mind. Ah, Mariot, your last virtue and your last chance faded from the heart of Mignon that morning. She scorned, she despised you, when you left the house, full of dark devices for the overthrow of your brother man!

Mignon went to the window, the only one in the room, and which fronted the street. The sash was raised a little. Mariot and her father had reached the hall door, and the former was upon the steps when she heard him remark:

"Here comes Brion!"

Mademoiselle Bellmar cast her eyes down the street, and saw a man on horseback. He was mounted on a stout, bay animal that carried himself proudly, like a trained horse on parade. The presentation was striking, calculated to impress one with the majesty of the human figure, the noble strength and spirit of the horse, and the dignity of both when gracefully united.

"How noble!" exclaimed Mignon, enthusiastically, then blushing at her warmth, she drew back.

Brion sat firmly and erect, his stalwort proportions seeming a portion of his glorious steed, his left hand grasping the rein, his right at rest by his side, his face a-glow, his bold eyes full of animation.

"A fine picture. O Pierre Mariot, if you could only look like that," soliloquized Mignon. "But that is impossible; only a noble nature can look noble."

"He reminds one of the gallant cavaliers of the old school," she heard her father say. Brion was now opposite the house; he raised his eyes to the window and saw Mignon. She was charming, and the gaze he thus unwillingly surprised, thrilled him and made him blush like a school-girl convicted of a misdemeanor. Familiarity with Nature in her simplest and yet grandest form of development had not blunted Brion's susceptibility to those delightful emotions which the presence of a lovely woman inspires. For a second, an appreciative space of time to the soul—the mountaineer was dazzled and at a loss; then he recovered his self-possession, and bowed like a knight templar.

Mignon ran from the window in a strange flutter of excitement, and the sound of clattering hoofs followed her to her chamber.

O Mignon! lost and won in a single day!

Three individuals answering to the appellatives of Grenier, Kincaid and Gardette, were seated upon a bench not far from the establishment of Bellmar & Mariot. The first was a German, the second a Frenchman, the third a half-breed. Grenier was despairing, Kincaid angry, Gardette sullen, and all were hungry. They belonged to the lazier, less efficient and most unscrupulous of the mountaineers. Their present possessions were meagre, having nothing about them but bad reputations, which they had richly earned, and were in a fair way to keep. They had offered their services to various fur companies without success, their characters for good-for-nothings being pretty extensively known and appreciated.

The three unworthies had been seen about Westport, more or less drunken for the last three weeks, during which time they had created a feeling of universal dislike, not unfrequently insulting the wives and daughters of respectable citizens, beside committing various thefts to gain the means, probably, of continuing their debauch. Their resources, as well as the patience of the inhabitants, were at length exhausted; they were warned to leave the place within four and-twenty hours, under the dire penalty of a coat of tar and feathers—a garment dreaded alike by every class of the genus homo. The short period of grace allowed them would expire in the morning; but there were serious obstacles in the way of their departure. Let it be understood that they had no horses, no arms, nor anything like a proper outfit for the mountains. They could have dispensed with the first, had they been provided with the second; but guns and ammunition were essential necessities, without which they would starve upon the trail. They realized the dilemma into which they had fallen, and were combining their remaining wits to surmount the difficulties that beset them. Various projects had been discussed, but all in turn rejected, either as impracticable, or unadapted to the emergency; hence their gloomy visages.

"Monsieur Mariot comes this way," said Kincaid, whose anger-inflamed eyes chanced to be turned to the storehouse of Bellmar & Mariot.

"Let him come," retorted Grenier, in a melancholy tone.

"Let us hold a knife to his throat till he hire us," proposed the former.

"That's a fool's advice!" affirmed Grenier.

"You're always grumbling!" quoth Kincaid.

"Let us go to the Indians!" said Gardette.

"And have our scalps taken off," added Kincaid, spitefully.

"Be still. Mariot has something to say to us. I know by the way he looks and walks," said Grenier.

Pierre Mariot approached the trio with a mien so guarded that it was impossible for the parties to divine whether his coming boded good or evil.

"Well, messieurs, when do you start for the mountains?" he asked.

Grenier held his tongue; the half-breed turned his back to the questioner, and Kincaid said, in a defiant voice:

"When we get ready, monsieur!"

"Ah, I see! you're waiting for an outfit," returned Mariot, in a tone that at once reminded Kincaid of the tar and feathers in reserve; he clenched his fist, and scowled ominously.

"You'd do well to keep your jests at home!" he gruffly retorted.

"You are in excerable temper, my good fellow. What will you wager that I shall not make you more amiable before I leave you?"

"You'd better go about your business!" said Kincaid, perversely.

"Be reasonable, and don't destroy the only chance left you; it lays between starvation and feathers, as it is now; but I can set you right again, if I will."

"We tried you, and you refused us—hiring green hands in preference; that is why I advise you to leave us."

"But if I have changed my mind?"

"Why then, speak out, and we'll hear you."

"You are acquainted with the country?"

"I know every yard of it from here to Columbia River. I have starved in the Wind River range, feasted at the Yellow Stone, frozen on the Salmon Mountain, and thawed at Walla-Walla. So have my comrades," asserted the Frenchman, confidently.

"Are you on friendly footing with many of the Indian tribes?"

"With nearly all of them."

"And can speak their language, I suppose?"

"As well as my mother tongue."

"I want men who combine shrewdness, energy and courage, with other qualities."

"We have all the qualities you want, monsieur," said Kincaid, modestly.

"I wish you to act as my agents. I shall pay you liberally, providing you enter into my service with zeal."

"Agents, Monsieur Mariot!" exclaimed Grenier.

"Agents in reality, if not openly. You know there are rival hands in the field."

"I get a little light, monsieur,"

"I shall supply you with horses and all that you need. This is no place to give you instructions, neither is our office; therefore you will meet me at Bellmar's, where we can talk confidently, for you must know this is a matter of great importance and secrecy."

"We'll be there, but our engagements wont admit of much delay, monsieur," said Kincaid, with a knowing leer.

"I am aware of it," Mariot answered, with a smile. "And now promise me that if I pay you a few dollars in advance, you will not go and get so drunk that you will not be able to comprehend what you will be required to do."

"O, sir, as if that were possible!" cried Grenier, innocently, casting at the same moment a meaning glance at his associates.

"You are trusty as steel itself, I've no doubt; so here is what will pat different faces on you."

"That has the complexion of silver, I really believe!" said Kincaid.

Mariot having said all that he deemed of any consequence, left the mountaineers to reflect on the happy turn of circumstances.

"You may be sure something wicked is to be done," said the Frenchman, the moment Pierre was out of hearing.

"Cunning and bad," quoth Gardette.

"Our consciences are tender," Kincaid added, with mock sanctimoniousness.

"And obliging to a weakness," said Grenier.

"Therefore should be strengthened by internal applications. Come, mountaineers, remember we are to conduct civilly and morally, and not make brutes of ourselves. Only think that Mariot could for an instant imagine we should get drunk! *Foudre!* were ever men so wronged!" cried Kincaid, in better temper.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

ANGIE CLARE.

BY WILLIE B. PARSON.

How my poor heart faints and flutters at the mention of her name,
With the sweet and ceaseless terror of a caught bird yet untame;
Once like it, I roamed at liberty, and warbled oft a lay,
Or dreamed a dream of pleasure, in the twilight of each day.
But where Beauty goes a trapping, tell me, who escape may gain!
And when Cupid comes to help her, tell me, who resists the twain?
So the light that lay in her blue eyes, so mildly bright and fair,
Brought another willing captive to the feet of Angie Clare.

But alas! I'm like a vessel, amid many more that move
Down the fickle current, subject to the mad caprice of Love;
Or perhaps more like a twinkling orb, attendant on the moon,
Lost in her starry retinue, on some pleasant night in June.
Like an angel from the beauty, lighting up her rosy face,
With her heart so full of innocence, her actions full of grace;
When she passes by her worshippers, the fairest of the fair,
We all say, the queen of loveliness is seen in Angie Clare.

She was born when brave old Autumn lifted high his magic wand,
Over fields ripe for the sickle, and across a smiling land;
And when Plenty, crowned with corn and grapes, stood knee-deep in the field,
Meting out to waiting millions, all the willing earth could yield.
Twenty times such golden visions have been given unto her,
Adding regal grace and glory—beauty's frankincense and myrrh.
O how very pure and beautiful, with regal grace and air,
She walks amid the gathering throng, the peerless Angie Clare.

Yes, very beautiful she is, more like a pleasant dream
Of splendor, floating down the tide of some rose-guarded stream;
Or more like a vision some have seen who patient watch and wait
Before the walls of Paradise, at the alabaster gate;
For they see its open door now and then, to let a spirit in,
And through it they catch a glimpse of life, when undefiled by sin.
Yet, though pure amaranthine crowns the holy angels wear,
I ween not one looks lovelier, than our own Angie Clare.

Others love, but I adore her with an adoration deep;
Deeper than the ocean's bosom, higher than the eagle's sweep;
In the depths of her blue eyes I look, and looking there I find
The index of a spirit pure, and of a spotless mind.
I have only Hope to buoy me up; her ways just now are bright.
And I dare believe fruition will one day give me delight.
O the world would no attraction have, with all its beauties rare,
Had I a cottage shared in love, by me and Angie Clare.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

THE SCARLET SPECTRE:

—OR,—

CAPTAIN PAUL AND HIS GOLD.

BY F. CLINTON BARRINGTON.

The northern portion of the coast of New Jersey is indented with several inlets, small bays and creeks, the resort in storms of coasting buggers and fishing smacks, and only approached by larger vessels when stress of weather drives them in for shelter. About these little bays and creeks are congregated hamlets or villages, if we may give this name to a collection of a few houses, half a dozen stores, and an inn, with perhaps a plain, rustic church.

One of these hamlets stood on a little bay about a mile and a half from the ocean-shore; and from a gentle eminence the broad sea, with its numerous sails, was visible. On this eminence stood a large, old-fashioned Jersey mansion, weather-browned and venerable, with nearly a century's age over it. It was the abode of the richest man of that region—Captain Paul Rodney. He had made his fortune by fishing; not exactly by catching fish himself, but by employing numerous small vessels which he owned, and which indeed were built and launched from a ship-yard just under the sand hill on which his house stood.

"Captain Paul," as he was called, by all the country down and wide, had once followed the sea; but for thirty years past, he had been the largest salt sea merchant in that port of the Jerseys. From the "look-out" on top of his old mansion, which he had bought for a song of a decayed heir of a revolutionary family of the ancient aristocracy, he could survey in the morning of our story four hundred acres of barren field belonging to him, without a sheep or a cow grazing upon it, seven fishing and oyster smacks at anchor in the inlet, a wharf with a long warehouse upon it, where he "kept store," and sold goods of all sorts to the country folks, a vessel on the stocks, the village just to the left of his wharf, inhabited chiefly by fishermen and oystermen's families; and beyond, the ocean, which he, facetiously, called "his farm." For Capt. Paul was no agriculturist, and if he had been, his worn out domain would never have repaid labor; so he let his land go barren and unfenced down even to the sea-beach.

"Captain Paul was rich." That was all he wished people to say of him! For money he would risk the curses of the poor debtor, so that men might say he was a rich man. What cared he what tears or blood were on his gold and silver, so that the gold and silver reached safely his hand!

Captain Paul was therefore a wealthy man, and like most men "who make haste to be rich," a hard man. If, at the end of the season, when he settled up with his fishermen, he found that their store account with him was four times their wages, he would say, with his cold smile:

"Well, Carson,"—or "Well, Ames," or whoever might be the poor fellow whose family had been supported *out of the store* while he, himself, was on the deep working to meet the bill, "I don't see but you'll have to work it out!"

The man sighed and felt he *should* have to work it out. "Work it out" was the phrase for a sort of servitude that Captain Paul was the ingenious originator of. It meant that the man should go in his vessels, and pay the debt by his monthly wages. Now, few poor men who once got into Captain Paul's debt ever worked it out. They become his permanent slaves! They were his bondmen as much as ever a rich Roman had a bondman sold for debt in the market place. The debtors of Captain Paul were bought by him for the price of the debt they owed him.

"The captain has *me*, now," said Samuel Hardy to his wife, after going home from the store. "My store bill is forty-six dollars and sixpence over my wages! So he says I must work it out! At ten dollars a month in the smack, it will take me five months; and by the end o' that time there will be another store account as big as this; for you and the children must be fed and clothed. So I am in for it, and shall, like forty others, belong to Captain Paul, neck and heels! It is a hard case, and *he* is a hard man; for he uses unfair means to make families lay at the store, and get their husbands in his power. There is not one of us that dare say our soul's our own!"

"It *is* a hard life, Sam," answered his wife; "but we must submit to it. I will try and get along with as little as I can this season. You sha'n't be his slave long if I can help it."

"Why, that is a good wife! There are some of our men who have not touched their wages for nine or ten years; every dollar being kept back to go to their credit on the store bill, where we are charged three prices for everything."

"But what can we do?" said Bill Ames, coming in with a pair of oars; "the captain does it all in fair, open trade, and only takes advantage of our being poor."

"Yet there is something wicked about it, though I can't exactly tell wherein. In the Old Testament, creditors had to forgive debtors after a certain number of years—wipe off old scores, and give 'em a fair start new again!"

"I wish Captain Paul would follow the old Bible example," said Ames, laughing; "but he never forgave a man a debt yet."

"And yet he hopes God will forgive him his debts one day, I dare say," remarked the wife.

"Captain Paul fears neither man nor God!" answered her husband.

"But what can he want to do with all his money?" she said. "He has no children, and only a brother, who they say is a poor quack doctor in New York, that he hates. But there he is! Hist!"

And the three stopped and hushed like slaves in the presence of a dreaded master, as Captain Paul rode past on an old horse, with an older saddle upon his back.

He was a large, stout, muscular man, with gray, wiry hair, long and bushy; keen, silver-gray twinkling eyes, like two picayunes, set deep beneath his shaggy *affé* grizzly brows; a large, bony nose, thin, harsh-looking lips, and a stern, unbending look. He was near sixty years of age, dressed badly, and was followed by a bull dog, as much feared by the children of the hamlet, as the master was by the grown-up portion.

He looked at the three persons without any sign of recognition, though the woman curtesied and the men spoke humbly low in their throats, "Good day, captain."

But after he had walked his horse by, he reined in, and turning his head, said, in a rough voice, meant to be civil:

"You must come down to the store, Mistress Hardy, and see the new calicoes I got from York yesterday. My clerk will show them to you."

He then rode on.

"He wants to get me deeper in, so that I may never break my chains," said Hardy; "but I shall be clear in a year, wife, if you are true to me, and don't get the calicoes."

"That I wont, Sam! I will wear tow-bags, made into a gown, first!" answered the woman, with a spirit worthy of a Roman wife of the olden days of heroism.

So Captain Paul grew rich and increased in goods, and enlarged his money chest, and rejoiced in being "the richest man" of all the country round!

At evening he would sit in his porch and smoke his pipe alone by himself and his bull-dog, and survey his vessels, his wharf, his stores, his long sheds for drying fish, *his* village—for he owned every man in it, and had a lien on every cabin—and his possessions spread out around him.

> "Lord of the fowl and the brute,
> With none his right to dispute;"

for he was lord of his neighbors, too.

It was his custom always to smoke a pipe after supper, on his porch in this wise, and after that to go in, shut up and lock his goods—for he knew he had numerous enemies—and enter a rear chamber, where he slept, and where he kept a gun always loaded, and a pair of pistols!

On the night of our story, he was more than usually cautious in fastening up, and calling his bull dog into the great desolate hall of the old, half-occupied mansion, instead of leaving him outside to watch, as formerly. He also examined his arms. And he had good cause to be somewhat on his guard. It is true misers who have treasure in their houses are always on the watch. They dream of thieves and burglars. They think all the world goes about thinking how they may break into their houses and despoil them of their goods; they are nervous, and anxious, and unhappy, and miserable, and wretched; and whatsoever more words signifying trouble there are to be found in the dictionary.

Captain Paul was a brave man—most old sailors are brave. The sea, with its waves and storms, makes brave men. I never knew a seaman who was a coward!—never a captain who was not equal to any peril that he encountered, on land or sea. Captain Paul had been in his early years a seaman; and he was by nature as resolute as he was bad.

We have said that he had reason to be more watchful to night than usual; at least *he* thought so. His guilty conscience whispered to him that "slaves," even, can avenge. We will tell the reader what it was

In the hamlet lived one Ralph Warren. This Ralph was a young man, and his wife was the handsomest young woman in all the east coast. Ralph was skipper of one of the fishing smacks, of which his father had been skipper before him, but had been lost in a gale, and his son succeeded him. The young man was honest, fearless, independent, and popular for his frank and engaging manners among his class. If he had not been the noble fellow he was, he never could have married Kate Cressy, the daughter of Mr. Caleb Cressy, the farmer; for Caleb had not much faith in the sea as ploughing ground, although Ralph assured him that in ploughing the sea with his keel, he reaped a harvest of fish that got as good gold in market as the farmer's corn. Nevertheless, the farmer took a liking to Ralph, and gave him his daughter.

But no man's fortune is in the hollow of his own hand Ralph had not been two months married before he fell from the top of his lugger's foremast, and broke his right arm. This accident disabled him for eleven weeks; and what with losing wages, and what with the increased expenses that illness always brings on, by the time he was able to go on board again, he was in the doctor's and in the store's debt seventy-nine dollars! This was a heavy responsibility for a young man, whose only capital was his health, and whose wages were but fifteen dollars a month. The result was that he had to come into the list of "workers out;" in a word, become a "slave for debt" to Captain Paul.

But Ralph's first voyage laid him up. He broke his arm a second time, and for a year did nothing. At length he got well, but felt that he and his were slaves for life; for the debt, altogether to Captain Paul was three hundred and odd dollars, a sum that appalled the young skipper's arithmetic to calculate, or ever to hope to settle on fifteen dollars a month, expenses still going on at home at the same time.

One day, after his complete recovery, while Ralph was out fishing thirty leagues southwesterly, to be gone six or seven weeks, Captain Paul called at his cottage, the neatest in the hamlet. Kate, Ralph's fair wife, put down her pet year old babe upon the floor, and welcomed him with fear and dislike; for she had seen him before.

"Well, Mistress Kate, you have a fine boy there."

"Yes, sir."

"Very image of Ralph."

"I hope he will be like his father!" she said, timidly.

"Yes, yes—I don't see why he shouldn't; but I hope he will be a luckier man!"

"I hope, sir, you have no ill news from him."

"O, no. Don't look so pale!—you will lose all your roses. No news. Hope he is doing well. But you know he owes me a great deal."

"Yes, sir; but he willingly will work it out."

"Twenty years—take him twenty years!"

"I fear it will be long, sir."

"I have no doubt you would do what you could to aid him?"

"Yes, sir."

"I will give you an opportunity of showing your love for him, and your desire to take twenty years hard work off his hands."

"If you could, sir."

"You know"— here the vile bachelor whiskled—"you know I am a lone man! If you will come to the house to-night I will show you how you can, by a mere slight sacrifice, pay off your husband's debt at once!"

"By all means. O, sir, you are too kind! I shall never think you hard again! I thank you, sir. I will make any sacrifice for my husband!"

"Come up to the mansion, then, at seven o'clock to-night."

Innocence never suspects! Ignorance of sin often *looks* like knowledge of and consent to guilt. Kate Warren suspected no wrong. She thought only of her husband—and of doing him a good! At dark she was at the rich man's door. He received her, and admitted her!

She soon knew the sacrifice he demanded, and fled from his presence, shrieking, to the door. It was bolted! She leaped from a window to the ground! The bull dog arrested her by her dress, and held her until his infuriated master came up.

Voices were heard approaching. Her shrieks had roused the hamlet. Captain Paul, after threatening her with his vengeance, both upon herself and her husband, if she revealed his infamy, left her to re-enter his house. She was soon surrounded by her neighbors, and borne homeward, almost lifeless. She spoke only of the dog to *them*. Three days afterwards, Ralph returned, and she told *him* all. This was the day before our story commences. The effect upon the young husband can best be illustrated by his conduct.

By chance, there were in the inlet eleven smacks and oyster boats, with crews, altogether, of fifty-six men and boys. In four hours, every man of them knew of the outrage put upon him by Captain Paul. These men are brave and desperate! They have arms of their craft—spears, hooks, fish-knives and harpoons; and every craft carried one or more muskets for killing sea birds.

Captain Paul had intimation from some one that the whole fishing population intended to take Ralph's part and avenge his wife. This was on the morning of *our* story. But we have said that he was brave. He had the bravery of his bull dog, that fears nothing, not even death, not even God! Strong in this bull dog courage, he went about among his men to see how they were affected towards him. He was soon satisfied that there was a strong feeling aroused against him. They did not speak to him! They kept out of his path! He saw Ralph, but the latter paid no regard to his salutation, and moved, with a dark brow, away.

Therefore, at night, he locked himself in with more than usual caution. He did not know what might happen! He fancied that there might be some attempt to do him a personal injury. He knew that no vengeance is so sleepless and fearful as that of an injured husband! So he saw that his pistols were well loaded, and that his gun was duly primed. He then proceeded coolly to go down and count his money! Beneath his bedroom was a cellar. It was entered by a trap-door beneath his bed, and by a flight of damp stairs. Every night he was accustomed to carry down and add to his hoarded piles the money he had been paid that day. Bank vaults Captain Paul had no confidence in! He preferred being his own director and cashier. It is true he lost the interest; but he made it up by over-charges on his goods, so that it amounted to the same thing in the end. Indeed, every dollar he deposited in his cellar had taken full twenty per cent. interest beforehand!

He now crept under his bed, and pushed the trap aside, and with a lamp descended into the cellar. In ancient days it was the receptacle of the good wines and old of the former aristocratic king's secretary, who had built the house when the Jerseys were under the crown. But now there were only a few old bottles, and a few kegs that once held Port. These now held the silver dollars, and the bottles the smaller pieces of Captain Paul. Not less than eighty bottles were on the shelves, yet each was well filled with silver coin; while two demijohns were heavy with gold pieces; and in the kegs were dollar.

Captain Paul passed half his nights in this under-ground room, counting his money. He had more delight in gazing on his gold and silver than the old proprietor had in his wines! To feel that to-night he was richer than last night, was his sole happiness. On the present occasion he brought down two hundred and seventy dollars in hard money to add to his hoards! He had gotten that money by selling the cabin of a debtor, who had displeased him; and so, selling him out, he gratified his revenge by turning him, wife and children, into the open air.

"This makes in this keg just fifteen thousand silver dollars," he said to himself. "And in all five kegs, seventy-five thousand! There, in the demijohns are twelve thousand six; that makes ninety-nine thousand! And in the bottles—let me see. In each bottle three hundred and ten dollars, making twenty-three thousand and seven hundred dollars more! Let me see how much is it in all. Seventy-five thousand in the kegs, twenty-four thousand in the demijohns, and twenty-three thousand seven hundred in the bottles; now how much is this in all! It is one hundred and twenty-two thousand seven hundred! And then there are my vessels, my store, my warehouse, my dwelling and my land, to say nothing of my debts. I think I will soon come up to a quarter of a million!"

"This night thy soul shall be required of thee!"

The rich man started as if a pistol had exploded at his ear! He looked round with wild eyes. His picayune pupils expanded in his fear, to dimes—almost to pistareens! He could see no one! He was surely alone in the vault!

"Yet I heard the words! Who could have spoken them so close to, and so loud and awful!" he ejaculated, while drops of cold sweat stood on his forehead. He gathered courage to examine the cellar! He was relieved by the search. "Surely, it was in my imagination! But it sounded so real! Bull did not bark! So no one can be in the house!"

He, however, hastened to leave the cellar, and soon closed the trap behind him. On gaining his chamber he felt relieved. He took a pistol and went all over the old house. There were eleven rooms in it, and he occupied and furnished only two. All the rest were deserted, and given up to spiders, bats, which came in and went out at the broken windows, rats, and, as the villagers said, to ghosts!—for before it was purchased and inhabited by Captain Paul, people used to say that noises and groans were heard, and lights seen there. But, as we have said, Captain Paul being a brave man, and fearing nothing mortal or ghostly, took the house, and for thirty years had lived quietly there until this night.

Upon going all over the house, up stairs and down stairs, followed by "Bull," and discovering nothing but bats, rats, and a strange, ominous-looking white cat, that he did not much like the looks of, he returned to his room, put down his light upon a table, and prepared to go to bed; for Captain Paul thought that the greatest animal enjoyment for a man, next to having plenty of money, is to have plenty of sleep. He had, however, got but one boot off, when he heard, or thought he heard, a great shout! But listening, and hearing nothing more for some time, he fancied he must have been deceived, and so pulled off his other boot, placed his pistol within reach, blew out his light, and got into bed.

But he had no sooner settled his head well on his pillow, when he saw before him on the white wall, a sentence in letters of fire. It was so bright as to show him his jacket and hat on a chair! He stared at it, and his blood ran cold! The words were:

"He that grindeth the face of the poor shall be accursed!"

He started up in bed!—he trembled from head to foot! He was so terrified as Belshazzar, when he beheld the hand-writing on the wall. He sat bolt-upright in bed, and seized his pistol! The words seemed to burn like a hot iron into his brain!—he could not keep his eyes off of them! He saw them at length gradually fade before his vision, and the room was left in darkness.

"The devil must be in this house! It is haunted sure enough!" he gasped. "But what light is that? Hark! What shouts can these be?"

He sprang out of bed! His room was lighted up as if from the reflection of a conflagration; he looked out of his window, and saw his store in flames!

"They are burning up my property!" he shouted. "This is Ralph Warren's revenge!"

"Not revenge, but justice!" said a deep voice near him.

He looked round, and beheld before him a tall figure in fiery red robes, looking like a demon arrayed in flames! He retreated with horror to the opposite wall.

"Who—what—what do you want?"

"Thy soul!"

"Thou shalt not have it. I have no soul!"

"Thou hast well said! But thou hast the mockery of a soul which will never die! I have come for that!"

"I will buy thee off with half my wealth!"

"Nay, money—the whole world, cannot be given by man in exchange for his soul!"

"I will give you then the key to my vaults, and thou shalt have all, if thou wilt let me live! I cannot see my God!"

"Lay, then, thy keys upon this chair, and I will give thee ten years more life on earth!"

"But what art thou? Give me proof that thou art a spirit!" demanded Captain Paul, growing bolder on familiarity, and at the idea of losing his riches.

"I will read, then, thy sinful life as it will be read to thee in the judgment! Bear witness if I am not what I seem! When thou wert eleven years of age, thou didst with a pen knife, taken from thy brother, pierce to the heart a playmate and cast his body into the mill-race! At fifteen thou didst poison with berries thy own brother, because a little girl loved him better than she did thee!"

"But he did not die!" gasped Captain Paul, in horror and amazement.

"No; but the guilt of his death is nevertheless written against thee. At twenty thou didst destroy a young girl, after thou hadst deceived her! At twenty-two thou didst rob a bank! Then you went to sea. On the high seas you instigated the crew to murder the officers, and you took the ship and became a pirate! As such you—"

"Enough! No more! God only could know my life thus! And because it is so evil do I beg longer time on earth."

"Granted; but only at the cost of all thy wealth!" answered the red spectre, in a metallic, hollow voice.

Captain Paul bowed his head, and covered his face with his hands!

"Go forth! Leave this house and thy ill-gotten gains!"

"O, mercy!"

"No mercy! Go! Be thankful life is granted to thee—though thou beg from men bread to keep it in thee! Dost thou delay?"

The wretched and terrified man fled from the spirit, and in the hall saw Bull cowed and whining in a corner. He opened the door, and the dog rushed forth yelping with terror, and followed by his master, who saw stalking behind him the fiery form of the blood-red spectre!

On reaching the outside of his house, the wicked man fled rapidly to place as wide a space between him and the dreadful and resolute ghost as he could. But his way was lighted by the flames of his own warehouse! He hastened along the road, hoping to save something there, as he had sacrificed all in the cellar to the spectre's demand; but he was no sooner seen than he was received with a wild shout by threescore men who were watching the fire. They advanced towards him, and affrighted he fled before them. His way was stopped by the water!

"Vengeance! Death to the tyrant!" followed his flying steps.

A boat was near, and he leaped into it, and pushed away from the beach upon the sea, red with the light of the flames. He rowed with the desperation of terror. He saw the shore lined with his foes; and his store consuming fiercely in full view; while in his house he had left a demon in possession of his wealth. He rowed with supernatural strength; he trembled lest they should pursue him. Further and farther he pulled seaward, and every fathom he gained he breathed freer. But he saw a smack get underweigh and make sail, and steer straight out after him! He now felt that his four had come; he stood upon his feet and fell upon his back at every pull, hoping to escape. But the smack drew nearer and nearer; he felt that escape was impossible; he saw Ralph Warren at the helm!—he recognized him by the light of his own warehouse that shot far over the waves.

Suddenly a thought for securing his escape occurred to him. He ceased rowing, and got out of the boat and upset it. He clung to it with his hands, his head only above water. The ruse was successful. Ralph and his smack passed by him, almost overrunning him, without seeing him. He kept his head under the surface as long as he could while they went by. After running a mile out he saw them put back and pass him a quarter of a mile off and return to the inlet. He now righted up his boat again. It was full of water. He got into it and baled it out with his hat. After an hour he was able to use the oars and row on towards Staten Island. Astern he could just see the smouldering glare of the ruins of his stores. All his wealth was behind him. He had with him only his clothing, and not five cents in money. He was now as poor as the poorest fisherman. He had a mind to reach Staten Island, and then make his way to New York. He hoped there to find aid to enable him at the least to get re possession of his house and some remnant of his property.

The winds and waves, however, drove him on the ebb tide seaward. The land faded from his sight. He could see that he was drifting beyond the coast into the open ocean. He had no money. But what use would it have been to him there! He had no food!—he had no water!—he began to fear he should perish unless he could reach some shore. He then began to think of the voice he had heard in the cellar; of the letters of fire at the foot of his bed; and more dreadful than all, of the red spectre, who had leased him ten years of life at the expense of his wealth.

It seemed to him he was in a dreadful dream. He felt of his flesh, he rubbed his eyes, he examined the boat with his touch to see if all were real. He wished it were a dream!—he wished he could wake up!—he did not believe there could be ghosts except in dreams! But the cold air that chilled him to the bones, his blistered hands, a horrible dread overwhelming him, assured him that he dreamed not, but was actually the sufferer he seemed.

At length a storm arose. It had been climbing up the south-western sky half the night. Its fore-coming lightnings had been seen flashing far away in the horizon when he went to bed after coming out of his cellar. The clouds now hung broad, and wide, and black over the sea. It seemed to be the roof of a dark cavern, under which he was. He thought, "If I am overtaken with this storm, I shall be lost!"

But the hurricane heeded him not; the elements are deaf to human entreaty. They are deaf and dumb masters of the human race. He saw the lightnings grow fiercer—zigzag, arrowy, spear-like and chain-like! The thunder uttered its voice like a lion roaring, now far, now nearer, and then changed to the deep booming of artillery, as if a beleagured fortress were discharging all its cannon at once.

The winds leaped from the clouds above upon the sea below! They added their roar to the voices of the many thunders. The waves lifted up themselves, and with sullen growls imitated the thunder. The black waters became white! The billows chafed and chased, and drove onward one another. The little skiff, with the wicked soul in it, was lifted upon the surges, and launched into hollows, and, like a straw in the winds, was tossed by the strong waves.

Captain Paul could see neither sky nor land—only the sea and clouds! He could hear no voice but the thunder and the wind and the waves. He hung between earth and eternity by the thwarts of a little boat! The storm enlarged—increased—became terrific. His skiff was broken and filled with the rolling, onward waters, and sunk beneath him! He was left alone, battling with Death! He was not alone, either! No man is ever alone—his conscience is with him! God is always with man! Captain Paul thought over all his past life. It seemed to appear before him in one figure, as he had added up in his ledger a long column of debts, running through many years, and made the whole show at the bottom in one line! So at a glance he read the amount of his life's deeds, and he felt that he could not go before God with his impotent life on his soul. He had his childhood's idea that prayer should be made to God. He turned to pray; but he could only say:

"My gold! my gold! my warehouse! All is lost!"

So the waves rushed over his head! The salt water filled his mouth. He struggled to breathe; but more waves covered him, more waters filled his soul, and throwing out his arms in helpless combat with his fate, he sunk, down, down, downward, and down deep, into the far deep sea! And the little fishes drew near him, and touched him, and passed on!—and larger fishes passed beneath him, and raised him up on their strong backs!—and then the great sharks drew near, and toyed with him with their long snouts; and finally, ere he had got to the bottom of the sea, he was devoured by marine monsters! and in five minutes, no sign that Captain Paul had ever lived remained, but his soul! *That* the sharks could not devour, nor death destroy, nor the deep sea hold! So it went up to its God; and Captain Paul was in the soul, was a part of the soul—*was* the soul! It was not Captain Paul the sharks ate, but only some bones and flesh in which Captain Paul had lived and sinned on earth! It was not a soul, but Captain Paul himself, unsoiled, that went up to God to give an account for the deeds done by him embodied! Captain Paul could *not* die!

Now let us return to the hamlet. The fishermen and oystermen had commenced their revenge by burning the store of their tyrant and master; and they intended to burn his house afterwards; but they had no thought of laying a hand on his life! Ralph, who was at their head, counselled that they should all *flee* themselves from him by destroying all evidences of their debts to him in punishment for his crimes; that then they should burn down the house, the depository of his ill-gotten gold.

But they had no part in the scenes within the house. The fishermen knew nothing of the voice in the cellar, the fiery writing, nor of the spectre; this was quite an independent and separate matter. The credit of this scene is due (now we are very sorry to spoil an excellent ghost story, but we must be veracious chroniclers) to the vagabond brother, the quack doctor. This gentleman, who had more patches in his pants than pennies in their pockets, was not ignorant of his brother's wealth, nor of his brother's dislike of him. They had not spoken for thirty years. The quack struggled with poverty and a large family. He had a genius for everything; he was a mesmerizer, a phrenologist, a chemist, and even had been a necromancer, and gone about the country as a professor of legerdemain. He was a good ventriloquist, and no bad medium for spirit-rappers. But all his ingenuity and talents could not keep poverty out of the door; so at fifty-nine years of age he found himself a poor loafer, with nothing to do, and seven unmarried daughters on his hands. So the tempter put it into his head to see what he could do with his brother. He disguised himself as a peddler, and appeared in the hamlet just at the time that the sensation about Ralph's fair wife was making the blood of all the men boil. He now learned his brother's true character; he even approached his house and sold him, unknown to him, a pair of razors; he managed to see how the windows were fastened. An astrologer, a mesmerizer, a phrenologist, a legerdemain professor, a ventriloquist, a spirit-rapper, is not likely to let any chance escape him for looking about and "taking advantage."

The result was that the next night the quack doctor was by his sleeping brother's bedside! He applied thereupon a sponge dipped in chloroform to his face. While his brother was enjoying delightful chlorific visions of untold wealth, the doctor was in his vault telling his dollars! The following night, when Captain Paul descended into his vault, the doctor was in the room above, and ventriloquially sent his voice below, repeating, as if at his ear, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee."

Ere the captain ascended, the magician wrote on the wall with phosphoresent fluid the sentence of fire that appalled him; and in a scarlet dress, smeared with phosphoresence, he appeared to him as the scarlet spectre! The rest is known to the reader.

We feel we have spoiled a capital ghost story; but "truth is powerful and will prevail." The most remarkable feature is the coincidence of the time of the fishermen's rebellion with the doctor's spectral and ventriloquial operations. Of the death of Captain Paul in the storm there can be no question. No boat could have lived on such a night, and in such a storm as followed his flight.

The doctor, little dreaming that his brother's soul *would* be required of him that night, was not loath to succeed to the inheritance of his wealth. He removed to the old mansion with his seven daughters, married them all off in twelve months, with a fortune of five thousand each—and cheap at that, he used to say to himself. To the fishermen he became a kind friend, forgave them their debts, and died three years ago, leaving behind him a memory as glorious as his brother's was accursed.

WOULDN'T ACCEPT.

One of our eminent New England Doctors of Divinity—says the Boston Transcript—recently declined a call to service under somewhat novel circumstances. Being in the interior of the State of New Hampshire, he thought he would make a pedestrian tour, which would occupy him nearly a week's time, and as he must be prepared for all weathers, he did not take his best suit or hat for the journey. He was overtaken one afternoon by a very severe thunderstorm, and as no place of shelter was at hand, he was out in the rain, and got pretty thoroughly drenched. After this, his appearance was not very prepossessing, and in one place the young people evidently took him for a straggler. One might be obtained food and lodgings at a farmer's house, and not disclosing who he was, the farmer made overtures to him, on account of his temperate and honest looks, to remain with them through haying time, promising him the best wages. This kind offer was declined, when it was renewed with the added advice that the stranger had better not refuse such a good chance, as he could not do so well at anything else, in these times, as to let himself to a farmer by the month. The farmer, doubtless, little thought that his guest was already engaged in a service where his attainments and character yielded a larger annual return than the worth of his own farm, and that the person he wished to use his scythe, had wielded his pen with a power which had given him a name among learned men on both sides of the Atlantic.

THE AMERICAN POET-ARTIST.

The London Athenæum speaks in the highest terms of the poet-painter, Mr. Buchanan Read, at present in Florence. His paintings are said to be highly imaginative. The "Culprit Fay" is thus described: The king and queen, surrounded by their court, are seated on a toad-stool for their throne, with a lily for their canopy of state. The Culprit Fay, who has dared to marry a mortal, stands before them on his trial, while on a lower step to the throne is the court jester, with a convolvulus for his cap. Lilies, flowers, and various kinds of shrubs are growing around. "Undine carried off by a Lover" is highly successful, and "The Lost Pleiad" is considered to be the most original and imaginative in his study. The Pleiads are represented by six lovely female forms, clad in a gauzy dress, which scarcely serves to conceal their forms. They are embracing one another, and seem to be unconscious of the loss of their sister, all except the highest in the group, who perceives the vacuum that has been created, and is shading her eyes while she looks down on the falling Pleiad.

"YOU FORGOT ME."

A good joke is told at the expense of one of our church going citizens, who is the father of an interesting family of children, and among them a bright eyed boy numbering four or five summers, the pet of the household, and unanimously voted the drellest little mischief alive. On Saturday night he had been bribed to keep peace and retire to bed an hour earlier than usual, with the promise that on the morrow he might go with the family to church. On Sunday morning it was found inconvenient to put the youngest through the regular course of washing and dressing necessary for his proper appearance at the sanctuary, and the family slipped off without him. They had not, however, more than become comfortably seated in their pew, when in walked the youngest with nothing on but a night wrapper and a cloth cap.

"You forgot me," said he, in a tone loud enough to be heard all over the church.

The feelings of the parents can be more easily imagined than described.—*Lafayette (Indiana) Journal.*

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

WAIKNA: or Adventures on the Mosquito Shore. By SAMUEL A. BARD. Harper & Brothers, New York.

A valuable work of 300 pages, describing travels through the Mosquito kingdom, and a full history of the Mosquito Indians and their origin. Mr. Bard, though professing to be only an artist with the pencil, has proved himself master of the pen. For sale by Fetridge & Co.

WOMAN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. By MARGARET FULLER OSSOLI. J. P. Jewett & Co., Boston.

Few persons are unfamiliar with the writings of this late gifted lady. "She wrote," says Horace Greeley, "as one who had observed, and who deeply felt what she had deliberately uttered."

THE HEIRESS OF HOUGHTON: or The Mother's Secret. No. 156 of Harper's Library of Select Novels.

The Harpers have always been judicious in their selection of novels for republication in cheap form; and as the "Heiress of Houghton" is equal to its predecessors, it will no doubt meet with a large sale.

MODERN MYSTERIES EXPLAINED AND EXPOSED. By Rev. A. MAHAN. John P. Jewett & Co., Boston.

A work of nearly five hundred pages, in which the author swallows A. J. Davis with one gulp,—spiritual humbugs with another—crushes witchcraft and fortune-telling without mercy, and claims that all spiritual manifestations are effected by odylic force alone. It is a work of great power, and will be read by friends and enemies.

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CONTENTS OF OUR NEXT NUMBER.

"Mrs. Temple's Visit to Fashionable Watering Places," a tale by EMMA CARRA.
"The Unwelcome Guest," a story by MARY L. MEANY.
"Sunday in Mexico," a sketch by GEORGE G. GAITHER.
"Misanthropos," a poem by BAYOU.
"Words of Love," verses by HARRIET A. DAVISON.
"Willie," lines by E. R. BURTSWELL.
"Watching by the Sick Bed," stanzas by JOHN K. THOMAS.
"The Drunkard's Plea," a poem by FANNY BELL.
"City Life," verses by FREDERICK J. KEYES.

ARTICLES DECLINED.

"Tale of Valley Forge," "I think of thee," "Alonzo Maitland," "Angry Words," "A Memorie," and "The Evening Vespers."

HIGH PRICES OF FOOD.

While every one has been rejoicing at the abundant harvests with which Providence has rewarded the labors of the farmer, every one has been complaining at the same breath—at least in the city—of the high price of provisions. The simultaneous existence of plenty and of famine is, at the first glance, inexplicable. In the early part of the season there was at least an average yield of the smaller fruits,—yet currants retailed at twelve cents a quart, strawberries at fifty and sixty cents per box; and, even in their height, blackberries brought fifty cents per box, which, by the way, is not a quart. But these are fruits, and may be called mere luxuries; but the commonest vegetables have been more than proportionably high. This imposition has been submitted to long enough. So long as it was known that crops were actually short throughout the country, our people paid the high prices demanded, though with many a groan, and waited patiently for better times. But now that those better times have come, and plenty crowns our fields, the positive abundance of supply and the ruling of the same high prices, have justly given cause to complaints, long, loud, and deep. People have had their eyes opened, and have looked sharply into this matter, and have succeeded in discovering how this ruinous extortion is effected. The producers are not benefited by these high prices—they do not receive them. It would be some consolation in paying high rates, to know that the small farmers of the vicinity, hard-working men who toil all day and start for Boston at two and three o'clock in the morning, or even earlier, to supply the market, were amply remunerated. But they receive no such prices. It is the middle-men, the marketmen, protected by an odious system of monopoly, who have all along created all these high prices. The regulation forbidding the countrymen outside the market selling after eight o'clock, A. M., compels them to dispose of their loads at a low figure to the retailers, who thus have the sources of supply almost entirely within their control. And this regulation, too, has shut off entirely large amounts of produce, the raisers of which cannot conveniently reach town within the prescribed hours. Other governments have interfered with the course of trade, by fixing a maximum price, —but this is an unjustifiable interference with the rights of individuals. Prices must regulate themselves. But in order to do this, the trade must not be trammelled with a set of regulations, partial in their operation, and favoring the few at the expense of the many. The public have a right to demand that all regulations which interfere with complete supply and perfect freedom of competition, should be instantly repealed. It is enough for citizens to pay high direct taxes—it is too much to tax them indirectly to an enormous and ruinous extent. The prices of food must bear a rational relation to the amount of supply, and any artificial disturbance of this balance should be annulled at once and forever.

In the Faneuil Hall Market Ordinance of 1852 is the following section:

"Any person may offer and sell, from house to house, in any of the public streets, lanes, alleys, or squares in the city, from out of carts, wagons, or sleighs, any meat, poultry, vegetables, fruit, or other articles of provisions, on all days when Faneuil Hall Market is open; subject, however, to any order of the Mayor and Aldermen respecting the standing of carriages in the streets, and to the ordinances regulating the sale of provisions, and the throwing of offal into the streets. No person, unless duly authorized by the Mayor and Aldermen, shall place any stall, bench, box, basket, barrel, block, or table, in any of the streets, lanes, alleys, squares, or public places of the city, on which to exhibit any articles of meat, poultry, vegetables, or other articles of provisions, for sale."

But this section has been rendered null and void by a city order, which drives provision-carts away from Quincy Market early in the day. The repeal of that order is demanded.

BOSTON STEAM LINE TO LIVERPOOL.—This enterprise is in the hands of gentlemen who have erased the words "fail" and "failure" from their dictionaries. It is bound to go, and the next fourth of July, perhaps, will witness the departure of the pioneer boat, with flying colors, outward bound, on her eight-day voyage to Liverpool.

MILK FOR BABES.—Three Alderney cows, imported into Boston, lately, cost $750. This breed is great, however, and no mistake. Their milk, if it be not a ball to say so, is almost solid butter. You churn, more from habit than necessity, and it is sure to come.

CHICAGO.—The census just taken shows a population of 87,500; less than a year ago, it was 60,400. Two thousand new buildings were built last year.

THE FRENCH LOAN.

The alacrity with which the French people lately subscribed a vast amount for the purpose of carrying on the war, on the security of government, is one of the most extraordinary events ever noted in financial history. The amount was no less than seven hundred and twenty millions of dollars; and the only difficulty in collecting this sum was to restrain the ardor of subscribers. The event is a most important one, in several points of view. It shows how abundant the resources of France are; and it shows, moreover, that the French people not only tacitly acquiesce in the rule of Louis Napoleon, but that they are ready to sustain his throne. For a long period —so long, at least, as Louis lives and governs wisely (and it is his interest to do the latter), the internal prosperity of France will not be disturbed by revolutionary movements. But in expressing this conviction, we do not mean to justify the usurpation. We never can be made to subscribe to the pernicious doctrine that the "ends justify the means." We look back upon Louis Napoleon's *coup d'etat* with mingled scorn and horror. In our eyes, the success does not gild the crime; and the splendor that surrounds the monarch, only lights the dark charnel that lies at the foot of his throne. But we accept his supremacy as a "fixed fact." We go farther—we believe that his sudden death at this time would be a calamity for France. Were he removed by assassination, or otherwise, where is the man who has the power to accomplish the Herculean task of reconstructing the political system on a new basis? France has, indeed, a plethora of great men, but a great lack of practical men. Lamartine, as he burst upon the world, in his temporary power of 1848, seemed fitted gracefully and energetically to hold the reins of state; but his administration was a sad failure. He temporized with all parties—was nervous, undecided, impracticable. He ruled the storm of revolutionary confusion for awhile, but was unable to regulate the turbulent elements it called into action. We do not despair of a republican future for France, but that future is, we fear, far distant.

FIRE AND FLOOD.

Barrymore was once congratulated by a gentleman on the success of a couple of pantomimes he had originated.

"Pooh! pooh!" said the old man, "they were just nothing at all; but I tell you I have in my pocket the programme of a couple of pantomimes I mean to play my benefit-night, which will astonish the town—Egad! The first is the 'Burning of Charlestown.'"

"The 'Burning of Charlestown!' But you run the risk of setting fire to the theatre."

"Don't be afraid," said Barrymore. "I've foreseen that, and the second piece will be 'The Universal Deluge.'"

Barrymore brought out the Scriptural story of "Esther the Jewess," at the Lion Theatre, in the course of which the church of Notre Dame figured as a local scene, and the royal procession crossed the stage to the music of the Marseilles hymn!

FEMALE CATTLE PAINTER.

The London papers are in raptures at the horses and cattle of Miss Rosa Bonheur, a French artist, who has attained the highest celebrity in her native land. She studies, and reproduces nature. We have seen a picture of her studio. It is a vast apartment, divided in the centre by folding doors. In one of these the lady sits, surrounded by pictures, sketches of animals, and all the appliances of her art. The other apartment is a beautiful stable, wherein are kept the horses, cows, and sheep, that serve her as models. At a proper distance from her easel is a bricked space in the centre of the carpet, where the animal she is painting stands under a properly arranged light. Her animals have a natural expression, and are faultless in anatomical detail.

FUNNY.—Some of the New York police reports are excruciatingly funny in their description of the errors of weak humanity. These reports are doubtless written with a good motive, the only danger is, that the offenders should be led to repeat their errors, merely to amuse the public. In Sheridan's "Critic," Mr. Puff speaks of a comedy of his, entitled the "Reformed Housebreaker," in which, by the mere force of ridicule, burglary is made to appear so absurd, that bolts and bars will no longer be required.

PERSEVERANCE.—The old proverb, "where there's a will there's a way," is happily illustrated in the case of Pessier, a young painter of Lyons. He was burning with a desire to visit Rome and pursue his art-studies there, but he had not a sou. In this dilemma he sought out a blind mendicant and said: "Come, let's go to Italy, I'll be your guide. Now and then you shall give me a bit of bread, I've got good shoes, and what more on earth can we desire?"

FROZEN COFFEE.—A Mons. Maillard, of New York has prepared an article of this sort which is pronounced delicious. It must prove a great blessing to housekeepers, for hitherto the grand difficulty has been in keeping coffee hot enough.

CLERICAL COMPLIMENT.—The reverend editor of a religious paper politely terms one of his brethren of the cloth, with whom he is having a controversy, a "carrion!" Very christianlike and gentlemanly!

THE GREAT REPUBLIC.—This clipper ship lately confounded the French officers by her fleetness when the screw line-of-battle-ship Navarino was detailed to accompany her from Marseilles to the Crimea, entirely distancing her compeer.

CURIOUS.—A monkey, belonging to a man in West Harwich, lately committed suicide from chagrin at being chided sharply for some mischievous tricks.

EDITORIAL INKDROPS.

A man in Maine stole a watch because his physician told him to take something.

A mail boy in Wisconsin lately drove off a robber by levelling a hammer handle at him.

Fifteen herd of cattle recently died in Pennsylvania from eating too many acorns.

Thomas Knowlton, of Wellington, Ct., hoes potatoes and corn in his 90th year.

At Seneca Falls, beans and sunflowers have been grown together, the latter for poles.

C. W. Hunt, the well known comic actor, lately died in the Charity Hospital, New Orleans.

Mrs. Wood, our favorite actress, has been much improved by her sea-side residence.

Gabriel Ravel has retired from the stage for the third or fourth time.

The number killed in the Crimea equals half the population of Massachusetts.

Kossuth rejoices in the war. Like Micawber, he thinks "something may turn up."

Old Ironsides has been condemned at Portsmouth, N. H., as unseaworthy.

Parry, the great Arctic navigator, died lately at Ems, in Germany.

Large numbers of persons in China are now actually dying of starvation.

The extreme sensitiveness of Byron, Burns and Campbell occasioned their resort to stimulus.

The total number of vessels wrecked on the coast of Great Britain, last year, was 987.

It was feared in Tennessee that the corn crop would be too large to harvest.

Danvers raises enormous quantities of onions.

"Those that have ears to shed," &c.

Mr. I. C. Pray is writing a work which will contain notices of all the American newspapers.

The recent German celebration, in this city, was a very successful one.

John B. Gough, recently returned from Europe, will soon deliver a temperance address.

A modern reformer complains that even poisons are adulterated.

In Sweden, a man seen drunk four times, forfeits the right of voting.

A LESSON FOR HYPOCRITES.

Hypocrites are met with everywhere,—false friends, false patriots. If it be indeed true that "hypocrisy is the tribute paid by vice to virtue," then we should rejoice that such a large amount of homage is rendered. Hypocrisy thrives best in the atmosphere of courts—we mean royal residences, and not courts of justice. And *apropos* of courts, Brissac, major of the guards under Louis XIV., detested the hypocrisy of the court, and was indignant when he saw the chapel filled with fine ladies when it was known that the king would attend worship, but entirely deserted when they had previous information that his majesty would stay away. One evening when Louis was to be present, and the ladies and the guards were at their post, Brissac made his appearance at the king's desk, took out his baton, and cried: "Guards, you are dismissed. Retire to your quarters; the king will not come." The guards obeyed the order. A murmur rose among the ladies, their candles were extinguished, and they fled, with one or two exceptions.

The major had posted brigadiers in the passages leading from the chapel, who stopped the guards and sent them back to their places, when the court ladies were too far off to suspect anything. Thereupon the king arrived, and astonished at the emptiness of the chapel, asked Brissac the reason. When the major told him the story, the king laughed heartily; but the fair hypocrites who were the victims of this ruse and exposure, of course considered it a very pitiful joke, and were ready to tear the major's eyes out.

EX-PRESIDENT FILLMORE.

This gentleman has been delighting the highest circles in England by his urbanity and politeness. Mr. Fillmore's manners are easy and informal, and his success in the aristocratic circles of England shows that in English high life, simplicity and naturalness are the rule. The stilted manners and bad French ascribed to the English nobility and gentry in so-called "fashionable novels," are to be met with only in the brains of Grub Street authors, who gather their knowledge of society from the revelations of footmen at pot-house confabulations.

"THE MISTAKE OF A LIFETIME."—Wm. V. Spencer, of this city has just issued a new edition of this novellette, the popularity of which is proved by the sale of two very large previous editions. It has been some time out of print and greatly in demand. It is a novel of adventure, and crowded with incident and character, belonging to the Dumas school of fiction.

HON. ABBOTT LAWRENCE.—This excellent man, whose death cast a shade over the city of his adoption, is reported to have left a fortune of two millions of dollars, the fruit of his honest exertions and intelligent enterprise. Yet he once described himself as a "poor, unknown and friendless boy."

LOUISVILLE, KY.—There is no military organization in this flourishing city, though several, if not more, private individuals keep "shooting-irons." The ultra peace folks must be delighted to know that there is at least one large American city where people are not pestered with parades of military companies.

FRUIT IN CALIFORNIA.—Dr. Frisbie, of Sonoma, California, gathered this season one hundred and fifteen barrels of pears from twenty-three trees. Sonoma must be a perfect Eden, provided there are no snakes there.

ROBBING GARDENS.—The new law punishes fruit pilferers by a fine not exceeding $100, or imprisonment in the House of Correction for a term not exceeding three months.

EDUCATION.—The people of Kentucky have lately voted to lay a State tax for the support of common schools.

BALLOU'S PICTORIAL
DRAWING-ROOM COMPANION,

[LATE GLEASON'S PICTORIAL.]

For the present week embraces the following contents:

The opening chapters of a new and finely elaborated and interesting novelette, the scene laid in the city of Mexico, entitled "Faxone, or The Mysteries of Mexico," by Accomplished J. H. DOLANTE.

"Harriet Green," a story by FERRET H. SHOOK.

"Company Faces," a tale by Mrs. M. E. BARNEY.

"Seth Sulpe's Sailor Experience," a humorous sketch by STEPHEN CORE, JR.

"The Dying Improvisatrice," a poem.

"La Peesia," lines by WILLIS E. PARSON.

"Good-Night," a poem.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

View of the New Union Club House, in New York.

Portrait of Oliver W. Holmes, the poet.

A picture illustrating one of Holmes's poems, entitled "The Height of the Ridiculous."

A series of Eastern Arab scenes; giving, first, a view of Arab women baking; second, an Arab well: third, an Arab Bazaar; fourth, Arabs threshing; fifth, the Well in the Desert; sixth, Arabs returning from hunting Gazelles.

Portrait of the late Hon. Abbott Lawrence.

View of a Street Railroad Car in New Orleans.

Representation of the new Wire Bridge across the River Danuber at Kiev, in Russia.

A picture delineating the Religious Ceremonies at the Consecration of the Bridge.

⁂ The Pictorial is for sale at all the Periodical Depots in the United States, at six cents a copy.

Foreign Items.

Mdlle. Cruvelli's approaching retreat from the opera stage into married life, is formally announced in the musical journals of Paris.

The Cunard line of Liverpool packets will soon boast of another magnificent steamer, the Persia, of three thousand tons and one thousand horse power.

Catherine Hayes has departed from Calcutta for Australia, where her popularity is described as being almost without limit, and her gains beyond all precedent.

Prince Albert has been composing music, and a piece of his was to be performed at the Birmingham Musical Festival. It is a finale, "L'invocazione all' Armonia."

The population of Brussels on the 31st of December, 1854, amounted to 255,225 persons, of whom 163,909 belonged to the city, and 92,216 to the faubourgs.

The Prince de Joinville is going to Vienna, on a visit to his sister, the Princess of Wurtemburg. He will also visit the Count de Chambord, *en passant.*

The Cantonal Court-martiai at Berne was lately called upon to try an Anabapist, who, being drawn for the army, refused to serve on religious grounds. The Court sentenced him to exile so long as he should persist in his refusal.

The marriage of the Grand Duke Nicholas, brother of the Emperor of Russia, to the Princess of Oldenburg, daughter of Prince Peter of Oldenburg, has been positively decided on, and will take place very shortly.

Multitudes of the Turks are said to be disbelievers in Mahommedanism, without being believers in Christianity. There are also numbers who partly believe in Christ, but have not grace to hazard an open profession.

The rumor that Spain will send a contingent to the Crimea is doubtful. Spain would ask for territorial guaranty, as Sardinia did, which guaranty would include Cuba, but it is probable that the Foreign Legion will be added to in Spain.

Dewdrops of Wisdom.

We have all a propensity to grasp at forbidden fruit.

There is no doctrine so false as not to contain it some truth.

They who have light in themselves, will not revolve as satellites.

It is the greatest possible praise to be praised by a man who is himself deserving of praise.

Nothing more is wanting to render a man miserable, than that he should fancy he is so.

A little management may often evade resistance, which a vast force might vainly strive to overcome.

The adherence to truth does not produce so much good in the world, as the appearances of it do mischief.

A wise man reflects before he speaks; a fool speaks and then reflects on what he has uttered.

All the sense in the world is useless to him who has none; he has no views, and can't be profited by another man's.

Principles instruct us—precepts guide us—but example moves us. Example is principle and precept *living* and *in action.*

The passions act as winds to propel our vessel, our reason is the pilot that steers her; without the winds she would not move, without the pilot she would be lost.

One of the saddest things about human nature is, that a man may be guilty of crimes in the path of life, without walking in it himself; that he may be a pilot, and yet a castaway.

Make the most of yourself, your talents and opportunities, watching with wide breath or empty sighs on what you might have been under kinder auspices. If your Maker had thought any other modes or opportunities better for you, he would have given them to you.

Joker's Budget.

To what town in Poland should you go to have a bad tooth extracted? Ans.—*Pultusk.*

Why does an aching tooth impose silence on the sufferer? Ans.—Because it makes him *hold his jaw.*

The People.—The ladder that helps statesmen to climb, and which they kick away as soon as they have reached the summit of their ambition. —*Punch.*

An opera singer failed to appear at a late opera, because he was "indisposed," on account of the small type in which his name appeared in the programme.

An Irish witness was recently asked what he knew of the prisoner's character for truth and honesty. "Why, in truth, yer honor, since ever I've known her, she has kept her house clane and dacent."

A rowdy, intending to be very witty, thus accosted a lady in the street: "Madam, can you inform me where I can see the elephant?" "No; but if I had a looking-glass, I'd show you a very large monkey." The rowdy slid.

A celebrated loper, intending to go to a masked ball, consulted an acquaintance as to what character he should disguise himself. "Go as-ole-er," replied the friend, "and your most intimate friend will not know you."

A young gentleman having made some progress in acquiring a knowledge of Italian, addressed a few words to an organ-grinder, in his purest accent. He was astonished at receiving the following response: "I no speak Inglis."

The Delicate Distress.—Sympathizing friend—"Why do you look so sad, Laura, dear?" Laura.—"Because, love, they say pink bonnets will be worn this season—and you know they are so very unsuitable to a girl of sentiment."

Quill and Scissors.

Some time since it was asserted, that a fortune left by one of the early Smiths, in England, was in waiting for his successors. We learn that the efforts made for the possession of this fortune have now been abandoned, as it has been ascertained that, if procured and divided, it would give but a few cents to each claimant.

The agent of an American house established at Odessa, was at Galatz making arrangements with the Vienna Steamboat Company for the conveyance to the Austrian capital of a large quantity of Russian wool, to be shipped at Reni, and this appeared merely to be but the prelude to much more extensive operations.

The estimated cost of the new Irish National Gallery is £11,000, of which Government contributes £3000 this and the same sum next year, making £6000 in all. The remaining £5000 is made up of subscriptions to commemorate the public services of Mr. Dargan, and is applicable to the object.

A new chapel of wood is in process of erection at Abo, Gold Coast, Africa. The zealous Christians of that place have travelled, time after time, a distance of twenty miles for materials, and brought down on their heads and shoulders nearly all the timbers for the erection of their chapel.

The N. Y. Mirror says: "There is no doubt but everybody in the United States, who ever goes to a theatre, will see Rachel once during her tour in the States; but a very few will go to see her twice, if they have to pay the price of a barrel of flour, or a week's board for the gratification."

A young Hindoo princess, sent to England by her father to receive a Christian education, has lately been presented to Queen Victoria at Windsor castle. The queen received her with the greatest kindness, and has walked with her many times in the gardens of the castle.

Workmen employed in the cemetery in Lawrence, on removing a stump which belonged originally to a large pine tree, and which had been cut so long ago that the stump was very much decayed, found beneath it the remains of an old well. When it was dug no one knows.

Richard S. Phillips, Principal of the Academy at Charlottesville, Va., had invited some friends to join him in a squirrel hunt in Albemarle, and was cleaning his gun, when, having drawn one charge, he seized the muzzle to blow into the barrel. The piece exploded, killing him instantly.

The queen has been distributing among some invalids from the seat of war, silk pocket and neck handkerchiefs, and neck ties, hemmed by the delicate fingers of herself and her maids of honor.

Mayor Wood has appointed Capt. John W. Bennett as boarding officer of emigrant ships in the port of New York. Capt. Bennett was formerly keeper of the Minot's Ledge Lighthouse, Massachusetts.

The residence in course of construction for the emperor and empress of the French at Biarritz, is not as yet completed. The chateau, which bears the name of Villa Eugenie, will, when finished, be very handsome.

A man named Husband committed suicide at New York, by taking prussic acid. Domestic difficulties troubled him, and the man with an unfortunate name took the readiest means to get rid of them.

A private letter from Athens announces that the currante appear to have escaped this year the fatal malady of the vines, which devastated them during three years consecutively.

It is said that there are over three thousand persons in New York city whose only lodging place is the doorstep, the coal box, or the benches in the public squares.

A man in Louisville, Kentucky, has offered a wager of one thousand dollars that no gambler has ever been imprisoned in the Kentucky penitentiary for theft.

The population of New York, by the late census, is about 640,000, an increase of 124,000 in five years, and at the rate of 24 per cent.

The Boston Traveller estimates that a barrel of flour baked into bread, costs the consumer $20, while the flour costs the baker but $9.

The barracks at La Prairie, opposite Montreal, which have been unused for a number of years, are now occupied by 500 soldiers.

The line of electric telegraph, now terminating at Constantinople, is about to be extended to British India.

It is said there are fifty-seven churches in Newark, a city of fifty thousand inhabitants.

The Newport News announces as the belle of the season, Miss Schaunberg, of Philadelphia.

Marriages.

In this city, by Rev. Mr. Howe, Mr. Charles Gorham to Miss Lois E. Andrews.

By Rev. Mr. Richards, Hon. Edward Kent, to Miss A. A. Rockwood.

By Rev. Mr. Streeter, Mr. Alden B. Smith to Miss Hannah T. Clark.

By Rev. Mr. Edmands, Mr. Roswell A. Ballard to Miss Nancy D. Harding.

By Rev. Mr. Stubbett, Mr. William Nichols to Miss Lucy Charlesworth.

By Rev. Mr. Robineon, Mr. Joseph B Bryan to Miss Louisa Hammond.

At South Boston, Mr. Milton George, to Miss Margaret O. Rathburn.

At Waltham, Mr. Henry D. Maynard to Miss Susan Brown.

At Quincy, by Rev. Mr. Dean, Mr. John F. Pool to to Miss Ellen F. Alden.

At Lynn, Mr. Henry H. Goodridge to Miss Elizabeth P. Dearborn.

At Salem, Mr. Abraham Berry to Mrs. Elizabeth Symonds.

At Fitchburg, Mr. Peer M. Bowen to Miss Eliza Ann Ellenwood.

At Holden, Mr. Charles H. Newton to Miss Harriet S. Mead.

At Wiborbendon, Mr. James M. Richardson to Miss Harriet Wheeler.

At Hampton Falls, N. H., Mr. Lewis W. Brewster to Miss Annie B. Green.

At Portland, by Rev. Mr. Moor, Mr. Charles G. Richards to Miss Annie E. Gates.

Deaths.

In this city, Mr. Z. B. Robinett, 40; Mrs. Sarah E. Peabody, 26; Mr. David Shute, 84; Miss Betsey Clarion, 74; Miss Frances A. Prescott, 18; Hon. Abbott Lawrence, 62; Henry Gassett, Esq. 81; Mr. Abel Baldwin, 73.

At Charlestown, Mr. Charles K., son of Mr. Richard Osborn, 5 years.

At Cambridgeport, Mrs. Sarah K., wife of Mr. Jason Quimby, 44.

At South Boston, Mrs. Phlena R., wife of Mr. Calvin P. Rockwood, 30.

At Hingham, Mrs. Sarah, wife of Mr. Frank M. Whittemore, 27.

At Waltham, Miss Elvira, daughter of Col. John A. Mason, 16.

At Quincy, Mrs. Martha Baxter, 71.

At Fetterolin, Mr. Joshua Gates, 86.

At Newburyport, William E. Channing, son of Mr. Joseph B. Moses, 15 months. Mrs. Hannah Floyd, 85. Miss Dorothy Stanchard, 66. Miss Ann Flood, 17.

At Plymouth, Mrs. Elizabeth, wife of Mr. Nathaniel Holmes, 59.

At Taunton, Mrs. Nancy Hall, widow of the late William Hall, 73.

At New Bedford, Mrs. Mary E. Coffin, widow of the late Paul Coffin, 61.

At Worcester, Mr. Henry Sterling, 29.

At Springfield, Mrs. Persis Marsh, wife of Mr. Tyler S. Blake, 33.

At Rockport, Mrs. Mary Tucker, 65.

At Nantucket, Mr. Solomon Macy, 69.

At Kennebunk, Me. Mr. John Jones, 75.

At Washington, Dr. Henry Lee Hosmer.

At sea, Mr. Miles Peterson, of Boston, 36.

o spoiled a capital ghost story; werful and will prevail." The feature is the coincidence of fishermen's rebellion with the and ventriloquial operations.

Captain Paul in the storm question. No boat could have night, and in such a storm as

le dreaming that his brother's quired of him that night, was ceed to the inheritance of his oved to the old mansion with ters, married them all off in with a fortune of five thousand at that, he used to say to himernon he became a kind friend, dir debts, and died three years ind him a memory as glorious was accursed.

ULDN'T ACCEPT.

tinent New England Doctors of ie Boston Transcript—recently service under somewhat novel Being in the interior of the mpshire, he thought he would ian tour, which would occupy ck's time, and as he must be weathers, he did not take his for the journey. He was overnoon by a very severe thunder-o place of shelter was at hand, rain, and got pretty thoroughly r this, his appearance was not ng, and in one place the young took him for a straggler. One ed food and lodgings at a farmnot disclosing who he was, the rtunes to him, on account of his honest looks, to remain with taying time, promising him the his kind offer was declined, when with the added advice that the ter not refuse such a good chance, do so well at anything else, in to let himself to a farmer by the armer, doubtless, little thought was already engaged in a service uments and character indeed a turn than the worth of his own the person he wished to use his ded his pen with a power which a name among learned men on e Atlantic.

ERICAN POET-ARTIST.

Athenæum speaks in the highest et-painter, Mr. Buchanan Read, lorence. His paintings are said aginative. The "Culprit Fay" ed: The king and queen, surir court, are seated on a toadthrone, with a lily for their canohe Culprit Fay, who has dared rtal, stands before them on his a lower step to the throne is the h a convolvulus for his cap. Lind various kinds of shrubs are od. "Undine carried off by a ibly successful, and "The Lost sidered to be the most original e in his study. The Pleiads are six lovely female forms, clad in which scarcely serves to conceal They are embracing one another, unconscious of the loss of their ot the highest in the group, who vacuum that has been created, and eyes while she looks down on the

YOU FORGOT ME."

e is told at the expense of one of ng citizens, who is the father of family of children, and among eyed boy numbering the five pet of the household, and unanithe drollest little mischief alive. night he had been bribed to keep ire to bed an hour earlier than e promise that on the morrow he the family to church. On Sunt was found inconvenient to put hrough the regular course of washng necessary for his proper appearctuary, and the family slipped off They had not, however, more comfortably seated in their pew, ed the youngest with nothing on upper and a cloth cap. ot me," said he, in a tone loud heard all over the church. s of the parents can be more easily n described.—*Lafayette (Indiana)*

EW PUBLICATIONS.

ventures on the Mosquito Shore. By ch. Harper & Brothers, New York. k of 300 pages, describing travels through glon, and a full history of the Mosquito ir origin. Mr. Bard, though professing tist with the pencil, has proved himself n. For sale by Fetridge & Co.

NINETEENTH CENTURY. By MARGARET L. J. P. Jewett & Co., Boston.

re unfamiliar with the writings of this "She wrote," says Horace Greeley, "as nversed, and who deeply felt what she had ced."

HOUGHTON: or The Mother's Secret. No. e Library of Select Novels.

have always been judicious in their selecr republication in cheap form; and as the ughton" is equal to its predecessors, it ect with a large sale.

MS Explained and Exposed. By Rev. A. n P. Jewett & Co., Boston.

arly five hundred pages, in which the A. J. Davis with one gulp,—spiritual another—crushes witchcraft and fortunemery, and claims that all spiritual manifected by odylic force alone. It is a power, and will be read by friends and

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uld send in their orders at once, as this is a l sell rapidly on account of its attractive ter and cheapness, and we print but a

M. M. BALLOU, *Publisher,*
f Tremont and Bromfield Street, Boston.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

LOVE AND INNOCENCE.

DEDICATED TO JULIA.

BY T. HOWLAND, JR.

My days have been so wondrous free,
The little birds that fly
With careless ease from tree to tree,
Were but as blessed as I.

Ask gliding waters if a tear
Of mine increased their stream?
Or ask the flying gales, if e'er
I lent one sigh to them?

But now my former days retire,
And I'm by beauty caught;
The tender chains of sweet desire
Are fixed upon my thought.

Ye nightingales, ye twisting pines!
Ye swains that haunt the grove!
Ye gentle echoes, breezy winds!
Ye close retreats of love!

While all of nature, all of art,
Assist the dear design;
O teach a young, unpractised heart,
To make fair Julia mine.

The very thoughts of change I hate,
As much as of despair;
Nor ever covet to be great,
Unless it be for her.

'Tis true the passion in my mind
Is mixt with soft distress;
Yet while the fair I love is kind,
I cannot wish it less.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

MABEL STANWOOD.

BY ELLEN A. KENDALL.

It was the witching hour of even. The azure sky was illuminated by a myriad of twinkling stars, which shone with resplendent brilliancy, while the flowers bowed their beautiful heads, as they listened to the musical murmuring of the evening zephyr, which gently shook their delicate petals, as it glided past them on its mission of love and mercy to the chamber of the wearied invalid. The silvery moonbeams stole through the lattice of an elegant cottage, encircling like a halo the face of a young girl of surpassing beauty, who reclined upon a costly couch within. A luxuriant mass of ringlets had escaped from confinement, their jetty blackness contrasting with the snowy whiteness of the pillow, but the dark eyes of the sleeping maiden were veiled by the long, silken lashes which rested upon her rosy cheek. It was a beautiful picture,—that fair girl as she lay thus asleep,—her small hands softly clasped above her gently heaving bosom; her ruby lips half parted, with a smile of singular sweetness; her attitude one of graceful carelessness. To gaze upon her thus, one would almost deem her an angel, too pure and lovely for earth. Ha! she starts wildly, an expression of deep and poignant anguish contracts her fair brow. One snowy arm is restlessly tossed above her beautiful head, while convulsive shudder passes over her frame, and a quivering sob of agony escapes her lips. She is evidently dreaming, but the entrance of a youthful maiden at this moment suddenly awoke her. With a cry of delight she sprang from her pillow, and burying her face in the bosom of her companion, burst into tears. "O, Carrie, dear, I am so unhappy," murmured she.

"Why, Mabel, darling, what can trouble *you?* You possess everything which renders life desirable,—beauty, wealth, and talent. Your parents and friends adore you, your lovers worship you, your rivals envy the admiration which your beauty and accomplishments excite, while I, your humble, little friend, Carrie Clinton, love you with my whole heart and soul. Would I were in your place; why, your beauty has made raving maniacs of one half the young men in D——, and senseless idiots of the other half."

"Pshaw, Carrie, how absurdly you talk," Mabel blushingly replied. "You altogether exaggerate my attractions, although I am well aware that I am beautiful; and it is the consciousness of *this* which renders me miserable."

A musical laugh gushed from Carrie's ruby lips, as she merrily exclaimed, "Why, Mabel Stanwood, are you insane? I should think from your present conversation that you were a fit subject for the lunatic asylum. Just to think that you should endure so much misery, because—because—why, simply because you are beautiful."

Mabel neither smiled nor laughed, but her lips quivered with suppressed emotion, and burying her face in her hands, she sobbed bitterly.

"Dear Mabel, forgive me," cried Carrie, springing to her side, and clasping her arms around the fragile form of the weeping maiden, "I meant not to wound your feelings," and the lips that had given utterance to these thoughtless words were pressed tenderly to Mabel's pale forehead.

The young girl checked her tears, and replied calmly, "Carrie, I have had a dream to night, a fearful dream, which casts a gloomy shadow over my pathway, and chills the buoyancy of my youthful spirits. Shall I tell it to you?"

"O, yes, please do," murmured Carrie, in a subdued tone, as she flung her graceful form upon the couch, from which our fair friend had but just arisen.

"Methought, Carrie, that I stood in the halls of revelry and mirth, where the voluptuous swell of music entranced the delighted senses, and fairylike forms were whirling through the dizzy mazes of the dance. Gallant cavaliers were at my side, whispering in my ear the honeyed words of flattery and adulation, pleading earnestly with glances of entreaty for one tender look from my bright eyes; sweetly I smiled upon them, and choosing from among this numerous retinue of admirers one of lofty bearing and distinguished appearance, I joined in the giddy dance.

"Methought, Carrie, that I was surpassingly beautiful that night, Jenny's exquisite taste having aided Nature in rendering me so. A rich robe of white satin fitted to perfection my elegant form, and fell in graceful folds about my person, while bracelets of inestimable value clasped my arms. As we glided past the mirror at the extremity of the apartment, I could not resist the temptation to steal a glance at the lovely vision reflected upon its polished surface. A feeling of gratified vanity lent a deeper flush to my rose-tinted cheek, while my dark eye sparkled with a brighter lustre, and my proud lip curled scornfully as I met the envious glances directed towards me from the bright eyes of rival belles. Carrie, you know I have always been a coquette, a vain and heedless one; then do you wonder that my heart's pulses leaped wildly with delight at the rapturous thought of the glorious triumphs I should achieve, the noble hearts I should ruin, and the new victims that should grace my long list of conquests that night? As my gallant partner conducted me to a seat, and gratefully murmured a few words of thanks for the honor which I had permitted him to enjoy, a tall and graceful lady, attired in black, with a heavy veil falling over her head and shoulders, which effectually concealed her features, approached, and begged me to accompany her to the dressing-room. There was something singular and mysterious in her conduct, and it was with a palpitating heart that I acceded to her request. On entering the apartment, I perceived, with a momentary feeling of terror that it was unoccupied. My fears, however, were instantly dissipated, when, gently flinging back the veil which enveloped her features, she revealed a countenance of such extraordinary beauty that when once seen it can never be forgotten.

"Mabel Stanwood," murmured she, in a tone of mournful sweetness, "you are gifted with rare beauty and talents. Should you exert aright those glorious gifts with which God has generously endowed you, your heart might be gladdened by the blessings of thousands, your pathway be strewn with roses. Alas! Mabel, you have courted the homage and admiration of the heartless world, while all the noble impulses of your nature have been checked by that love of conquest which has induced you to sacrifice upon the altar of vanity your young and loving heart, with all its boundless wealth of affection. O, Mabel, I entreat you, I implore you, by all your hopes of future happiness, to check this vain love of conquest, which, if persisted in, will render you an object of dislike and abhorrence, when age shall have silvered your raven curls, and dimned the radiance of your bright eyes. Would you only reflect on the many noble hearts which have been crushed, the many fond hopes which have been blasted, and the dark eyes which for the first time have been wet with tears of bitter agony for your sake, all of which misery has been occasioned by your dreadful coquetry, you would never indulge in this heartless amusement again. Leave the gay scenes of the ball-room to-night, dear Mabel, and go with me; you shall never regret it, I promise you. This phial," said she, drawing from her bosom a small bottle, 'contains a liquid, three drops of which will render you invisible. Will you go, Mabel?'

"I silently bowed my head in acquiescence, for there was a fascination in her tone which I could not resist. Before leaving the apartment, however, I swallowed in compliance with her request, three drops of the mystical liquid, whose virtues, according to the testimony, were truly valuable. After taking this necessary precaution to prevent discovery, I prepared to follow my inexplicable guide, who descending the broad stairway, passed through the open door into the deserted street. With rapid flight we glided past the lovely mansions and superb edifices, where the aristocracy of our quaint city dwells, until we arrived at the magnificent building where Judge Raymond with his wife and daughter resides. Upon arriving here, my companion beckoning me to follow her, ascended the marble steps, and passed through the open door, which swung on its heavy hinges to admit us. As we paused a moment in the spacious hall, we perceived a bright light, which appeared to proceed from the east end of the building. Following in the direction of this light, we found ourselves in a tasty little boudoir, the only occupant of which was a young girl, whose low moans of agony thrilled my heart with feelings of unutterable woe. Her face was buried in a pile of crimson cushions, amid whose silken billows she strove to smother her sobs, while her small hand convulsively clasped a miniature, upon which she gazed wildly ofttimes, pressing it passionately to her lips and heart, then, sinking back upon the soft cushions, such a tide of bitter agony would rush over her soul, that her skeleton frame would tremble like a reed shaken by the whirlwind. As yet I could not distinguish her features, but I well knew that those golden curls and that fragile form could belong to no other than Effie Raymond, and my heart smote me as the cause of her suffering. Upon the dainty toilet table, as if to corroborate my first impression, lay a quantity of open letters, inscribed in a manly hand to 'Miss Effie Raymond.' As I carelessly glanced at the signature, a feeling of quick pain shot to my heart, chilling its very pulsations with an intensity of suffering unknown to me before. Disregarding the presence of my companion, I eagerly grasped one of these tear-wet mementoes, from amid whose wrinkled folds there fell a withered flower and a glossy curl of raven hair. O, Carrie, I pray that you may never know the unutterable agony which filled my soul as I perused that touching epistle, every word of which burned in my heart like a coal of fire. Alas! each one bore the signature of Charles Sherwood, that old forgotten lover of mine, whom, from a feeling of pride and vanity, I lured from the side of his plighted bride, only to crush the noble aspirations of his manhood, break his tender, devoted heart, blast his ardent hopes, and cruelly disappoint the golden visions he had formed for the future, transforming him from a high-souled, proud spirited man into the degraded, contemptible thing he now is. Yes, Carrie, it was I who wrought all this woe and misery, I who first attracted him from the side of his trusting Effie, fascinating his mind and heart by a brilliant display of my beauty and talents—I, too, who tempted him with words of love and glances of tenderness, to break his vows to the gentle being, whose very life depended upon their fulfilment, bringing him to my feet, a humble suitor for my hand and heart. O, Carrie, dearest, if you would keep untainted the wellspring of your young and guileless heart—if you would be honored and respected by the truly wise and good—if you would not have the stain of suspicion sully the spotless purity of your fair reputation—if you would not embitter your whole life by one fatal deed, never, never, as you value your future happiness, trifle with the affections of another. Though many moons have waxed and waned since the fatal hour when Charles Sherwood knelt before me, all unmindful of the loving one to whom his troth was plighted, I shudder with horror even now at the recollection of the wild despair his actions evinced, when I calmly and deliberately refused the love I had won for this very purpose, and again I see before me in imagination those noble features distorted with agony, and that lofty form quivering like an aspen leaf with the violence of suppressed emotion. Only eighteen fleeting summers had passed over my head, when, stifling in my heart the whisper or reproach of conscience, I listened to the beguiling voice of the tempter, and sacrificed upon the altar of vanity the torn and bleeding heart of my first victim, this same Charles Sherwood as a fit trophy of my inglorious triumph. Two years have passed since then, two years of light and sunshine, and during that brief period I have carelessly crushed the fond hopes of many a loving heart, and dashed to the earth many a cup of bliss, which has but just touched eager lips. O, Carrie, I pray that God may steer your slender bark aright, purifying your gentle heart, until no thoughts of evil can there find a resting place, that you may prove to the doubting mind of the skeptic the almost incredible truth, that high-souled, true-hearted women can exist in the vitiated atmosphere of fashionable life,—be surrounded by all the splendors which unbounded wealth can afford, possess beautiful features and a graceful form, yet still be unsusceptible to the beguiling tones of flattery, and uncorrupted by the homage and adulation so profusely lavished upon them.

"Pray forgive this digression, which was quite unintentional, I assure you, and transport yourself back upon the wings of imagination to the elegant boudoir of the weeping Effie. Ah! she no longer reclines upon yonder pile of cushions, a silken couch supports her tender form, and her weary eyelids are closed at last in the repose of sleep. My mysterious guide is standing beside her, gazing pityingly upon her fair form, while she silently beckons me nearer, that I may trace the care-worn lines which grief has traced upon that alabaster brow. As my eye rests upon the fair features of the sleeping maiden, a pang of agony thrills every fibre of my heart, the fearful truth suddenly bursting upon my mind that the pulseless and beautiful Effie must soon be clad in an angel's snowy robe. Yes, Carrie, the almost unearthly paleness of her countenance, the hectic flush which tinges her velvety cheek, the delicate transparency of the skin, and the slender, attenuated form, all too plainly mark as a victim of consumption this once bright and blooming maiden. Her sleep is wild and fearful, she tosses restlessly upon the pillow, moaning sadly at times in her dreams. Poor Effie, thine is a hard lot, and it is no wonder that thy slender shoulders tremble under the heavy burden imposed upon them, a burden which must ever be unshared, and can never be alleviated, except by death. Sweet, patient girl, wretched as thy lot may be, there is one with whom thou wouldst not exchange stations, even to possess again the heart of the truest lover, one, who no longer adorable than thyself, is far more guilty,—that one is she who proved a successful rival to thee in the affections of Charles Sherwood, now lost to love and virtue forever, in the whirlpool of intemperance. As I silently and sadly gazed upon the effects of my youthful folly and indiscretion, my companion intently watched my features with the eye of one who can read every variation of countenance, which scrutiny was far from being agreeable to me. After passing a few moments by the side of this lovely girl, who was indebted to me alone for all the misfortunes which had assailed her defenceless head, she bade me prepare to take my departure from this splendid abode of luxury and wretchedness, to wander I knew not whither. As we silently glided out of the apartment into the magnificently decorated hall, which we had traversed upon entering, passing through the richly carved door at its extremity, which opened as if by some invisible agency to admit of our egress, such a flood of silvery light burst upon my enraptured vision, that, for a moment, I paused, entranced upon the threshold, to gaze upon the magnificent aspect which nature wore.

"A moment only I lingered to gaze upon the lovely scene of enchantment, while my young heart thrilled with feelings of love and adoration for Him who had created all this glory and splendor; then, with slow and lagging footsteps, I regained my companion, who appeared perfectly indifferent to the beauties which had so completely captivated my bewildered senses. As I mechanically followed the movements of this strange, inexpressible being, under whose mysterious guidance I had placed myself, night's balmy breezes, laden with the perfume of flowers, fanned my burning brow and kissed my waving ringlets, while ever and anon witching sounds of music floated upon their airy pinions, subduing with their soft, sweet melody the fitful throbbings of my heart, and rendering me almost entirely unconscious of the presence of another. I was soon awakened, however, from this blissful dream of ecstasy by the gentle voice of her whose winning tones of entreaty had first lured me forth from the gay scenes of the ball room, this beautiful evening; and with a deep-drawn sigh of regret I bade adieu to the fairy regions, within whose mystic realms my truant thoughts had been wandering.

"'Mabel, it is here, at this lonely dwelling, that I would make my second visit. Will you strive to conquer all feelings of disgust and repugnance, and accompany me?' were the softly murmured words which had so suddenly restrained the lofty soarings of my vivid imagination from the golden visions in which my fancy had been indulging, that quite a considerable space of time elapsed ere I could regain the command of my scattered senses sufficiently to comprehend my situation. What was my astonishment when, upon doing so, I found myself standing before a low, dingy-looking building, located in an obscure part of the city, from whence sounds of loud and boisterous mirth proceeded, intermingled with the rough shout of brutal laughter and the horrid tones of blasphemy. As my companion again repeated her request, I gazed upon her with an air of surprise and amazement, but there was such a truthful light beaming within the liquid depths of her soft eyes, that I immediately gave an affirmative reply, without further hesitation, my doubts having been entirely dispelled by the one significant glance which she bestowed upon me. An expression of abhorrence, however, escaped my lips, when, upon entering this rude habitation, we found ourselves in the midst of a motley and ruffian-looking assemblage, who were gathered around an old, rickety table, where several jugs and bottles, together with a few broken decanters had been placed. Truly has it been said that 'misery loves company;' what other consideration could have induced these degraded outcasts from society, forsaken alike by God and man, to celebrate here in this wretched hovel a feast unto Bacchus, the only god of their idolatry, drinking, fighting, and carousing until a late hour of the night, while not a moment passed that their lips did not give utterance to the most awful curses and imprecations which ever fell from the tongue of man, so horrible their import, that they chilled the life blood of my heart, and made my soul grow sick with feelings of deadly terror. For a moment I hardly dared to raise my eyes, fearing that some scene of savage violence would be enacted by this base, unprincipled gang before my very gaze; but, gaining more courage, as I became accustomed to their noisy revelry, and thinking that I recognized a familiar tone among their clamorous voices, I curiously scanned the lineaments of the inebriated group by whom I was surrounded. There was one amongst them, whose features, though bloated and disfigured from the effects of drink and debauchery, still bore the impress of nobility; one, who from a certain air of authority visible in his demeanor towards the others, appeared to possess that power and influence which superior minds always exercise over those more inferior. He was tall and slender, with raven hair and eyes of jet, a broad, expansive brow, and finely chiselled lips, around which there lingered no trace of lust or sensuality. A sudden suspicion darted through my mind with the rapidity of lightning, when, turning to my guide, I found her gaze also riveted upon this same being who had excited within my breast such an unknown interest, and giving his countenance one more searching glance, I staggered backwards with a wild shriek of despair, while the cold, clammy sweat gathered in big drops upon my forehead.

"O, Carrie, language is too feeble to portray, words too faint to express, the deep, unutterable agony which rent asunder each bleeding fibre of my repentant heart, when I recognized in the debased, the miserable wreck of the once gifted and high-souled Charles Sherwood. In the days of happiness and prosperity, ere sorrow had cast a shadow upon his heart, he had nobly resisted the bewitching wile of the syren, when she attempted to allure him from the path of rectitude and honor; but as the dark cloud of adversity began to lower in the brilliant horizon of his destiny, he had sought forgetfulness in the fatal glass, striving to drown his griefs and troubles within its sparkling depths. Step by step had he descended in the downward path of ruin and destruction, yielding almost insensibly to that magic influence which had fettered his haughty spirit with chains more galling than those which bind the swarthy African,—partaking each day more deeply of the charmed beverage to which he had first resorted, in a vain attempt to drive away the gloom and despondency which oppressed his soul, debasing his lofty mind by an association with the vilest and most despicable of earth's creatures, until, sinking to the lowest point of degradation, we discover him in this den of iniquity, the companion of thieves and drunkards, greedily listening to the rough jests and frightful oaths of his vulgar associates, his brother votaries at the shrine of Bacchus. The keenest pangs of remorse rankled in my bosom as I observed the wonderful change effected by the demon of alcohol, in his outward appearance, which had been so great as to prevent my recognizing him at first. Mentally, I felt that the change must have been more complete, as it had entirely destroyed and annihilated the giant intellect which, with proper care and cultivation, might have astonished the admiring world by the depth of its thought and the profundity of its reason. Ah, Carrie, was it not I who had crushed the aspiring impulses of the ambitious mind, which, had it been allowed to follow its first lofty promptings, might have soared far upward to the dizzy heights of fame, and won a laurel wreath to deck the noble brow of its talented owner! Did he not owe this degradation to me? to the fatal influence which I had exerted over him? Was it not my haughty rejection of his love which drove him first to the tempting wine-cup?

"It was an impressive lesson, one which I shall never forget, until death shall still these throbbing pulses forever in a long and dreamless sleep. The shriek which I had given utterance to, upon making the fearful discovery which I have already related, somewhat startled these noisy revellers, who, owing to our being invisible, were unable to ascertain its cause. The circumstance, however, seemed to hasten our departure, as my companion had laid strict injunctions upon me to maintain the most perfect silence in the presence of others. It was with a feeling of thankful gladness, therefore, that I found myself once more beneath the open canopy of heaven, inhaling its pure air, while cooling zephyrs fanned my heated brow, and imparted new life and vigor to my weakened and exhausted frame. Alas! the beauties of the starry night had now lost their charms for me, my mind was wholly absorbed in gloomy meditations, all unconscious of the moonlight's witching glow. A throng of recollections rushed over my mind, which had been long buried in the deepest recesses of my heart, now revived in the bitter hour of affliction, that they might add a keener pang to the anguish with which my bosom was torn. With a reproachful glance I gazed upon the fairy magician, whose fascinating allurements had tempted me abroad upon this never to be forgotten night, while a few incoherent words of blame and censure fell from my lips in broken sentences. My proud, acutsive spirit was deeply stung by the bitter thought, that I had richly merited the punishment so justly bestowed upon me, although I could not bear to acknowledge the humiliating truth to another. In tones of subdued sadness the angelic being whom I had so thoughtlessly upbraided, thus addressed me:

"'Mabel, I will not chide you for the wild expressions which grief has wrung from your wounded spirit, as I feel well assured that in your calm moments, when the storm of agony which has swept over your heart strings with such frantic violence shall have been assuaged by the more sober voice of reason, that you yourself will see the injustice of your accusations. The only reparation I demand is this, that you will once again be the companion of my wanderings, as I wish to make one more visit ere I leave this bright world forever. Will you go, Mabel, dearest?' murmured she, entreatingly, while a pearly tear trembled on her silken eye-lashes.

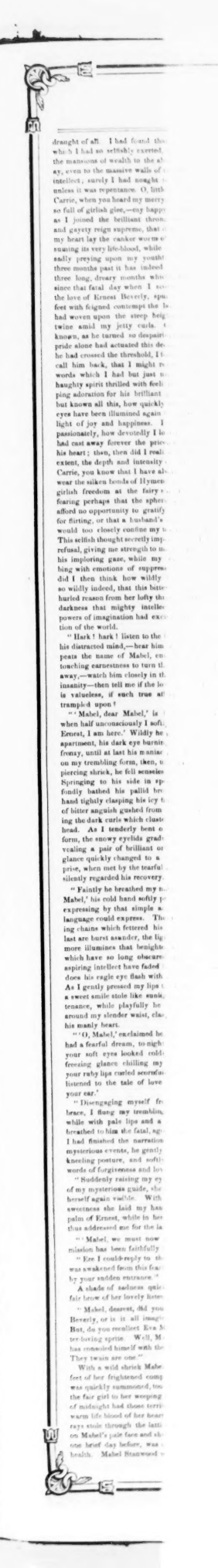
"Her soft, imploring tones had gradually subdued the haughtiness of my stubborn spirit, melting away the icy barrier of reserve which had chilled the warm impulses of my nature, until at last, unlocking the gushing fountains of my heart, the dewy tears rushed forth in torrents to my eyes, a sweet relief from the fearless agony which I had but just experienced. There was a touching pathos in her voice which I was unable to resist. I therefore signified my acquiescence to her request by a single wave of the hand, as I was perfectly incapable of utterance. Upon receiving this mute reply, she immediately hastened onwards at a rapid pace, bidding me follow, while in a low tone she assured me that I should soon rest from my weariness and fatigue. This assertion proved true, as ere many minutes had elapsed, we reached our destination, the lunatic asylum, a large, massive structure, where my companion paused, half doubtfully, as if uncertain whether to proceed or not. After a few moments' hesitation, however, she appeared to decide upon the former course, while an exclamation escaped her lips, whose mysterious import I was then unable to comprehend, when, lo! behold the heavy door swung open with an inviting air, as if wooing us to enter, while the building before shrouded in impenetrable darkness appeared brilliantly illuminated by a thousand flashing lights. Although stupified with wonder and amazement at the magical change this wrought before my very gaze, through the unknown power which this fairy enchantress possessed, I endeavored to suppress every outward token of surprise, subduing with a mighty effort the agitation which pervaded every fibre of my inmost being. While pausing musingly in the spacious hall wherein we were now standing, the silvery voice of this charming fairy suddenly started me from my reverie.

"'Mabel,' murmured she, in musical accents, 'it is no longer necessary that you should remain invisible to mortal eyes. I will therefore furnish you with a liquid, entirely opposite in its character from that which you swallowed in the festive halls of mirth, begging you to consent to the change which I will most inevitably accomplish. Here is the phial which contains the mixture, you have only to imbibe an equal number of drops, when it will instantly counteract the effect of that which you have already taken. The time has not yet come when I can safely reveal myself; entertain no fears, however, that aught of harm will come to you from this new transformation.'

"I immediately complied with her request, although feelings of dire apprehension oppressed my mind, when the frantic ravings of some inmate of this wretched abode reached my sensitive ear. Having placed the phial once more within the hands of its owner, I impatiently awaited her farther movements. After gazing thoughtfully upon my changing countenance, as if absorbed in deep reflection, she thus addressed me:

"'Although we may pass through trying scenes to-night, dear Mabel, I beseech you that you will not falter in the arduous path of duty, which we are now pursuing, for lack of strength or courage, as Heaven will surely sustain you. Be not alarmed by the yells and shrieks of madmen, who are too firmly secured to be capable of injuring you, even had they the will or inclination to do so. Follow me, fear no danger—all will yet be well.'

"After giving utterance to these expressions of encouragement and consolation, she immediately ascended a flight of broad stairs, while I closely imitated her example. We then proceeded onwards, assailed at every step by the frenzied cries of the poor distracted creatures whose cells we passed, until reaching the farther extremity of this gloomy edifice, we glided into an apartment furnished with great neatness and taste, the only occupant of which was a young man of exceedingly interesting appearance, who did not apparently observe our entrance. One glance sufficed to reveal to me the unfortunate fate of another victim to my pride and vanity; one who had been coldly, harshly repulsed, when he strove with burning, impassioned words of eloquence, to win the heart where love had never found a home. Alas! too well did I recognize in the slight, almost girlish form, the wildly brilliant eyes now sparkling with a brighter lustre than ever, the soft, curling hair, and high, snowy forehead of Ernest Beverly, the gifted poet, once the bright star in the literary world, now the wretched inmate of an insane asylum. O, Carrie, willingly would I then have laid down upon the green sward beneath the holy stars, and yielded up my life to him who gave it, could this sacrifice but have restored the light of reason to that shattered, wandering mind. I have drained the cup of sorrow to its very dregs, this last drop of agony proving the most bitter



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draught of all. I had found that the influence which I had so selfishly exerted, extended from the mansions of wealth to the abode of poverty, ay, even to the massive walls of this tomb of the intellect; surely I had nought to live for now, unless it was repentance. O, little did you think, Carrie, when you heard my merry, ringing laugh, so full of girlish glee,—my happy, joyous tones as I joined the brilliant throng where mirth and gayety reign supreme, that deeply buried in my heart lay the canker-worm of remorse, consuming its very life-blood, while secret love was sadly preying upon my youthful spirits. For three months past it has indeed been thus, the three long, dreary months which have elapsed since that fatal day when I scornfully rejected the love of Ernest Beverly, spurning from my feet with feigned contempt the laurel wreath he had woven upon the steep heights of fame, to twine amid my jetty curls. O, had he but known, as he turned so despairingly away, that pride alone had actuated this decision,—that ere he had crossed the threshold, I fondly yearned to call him back, that I might revoke the cruel words which I had but just uttered—that my haughty spirit thrilled with feelings of worshipping adoration for his brilliant genius—had he but known all this, how quickly would his dark eyes have been illumined again with the radiant light of joy and happiness. I knew not how passionately, how devotedly I loved him, until I had cast away forever the priceless treasure of his heart; then, then did I realize to the fullest extent, the depth and intensity of my affection. Carrie, you know that I have always dreaded to wear the silken bonds of Hymen—to sacrifice my girlish freedom at the fairy shrine of Cupid, fearing perhaps that the sphere of home would afford no opportunity to gratify my propensity for flirting, or that a husband's restricting hand would too closely confine my untamable spirit. This selfish thought secretly impelled my haughty refusal, giving me strength to meet unflinchingly his imploring gaze, while my heart was throbbing with emotions of suppressed love. Little did I then think how wildly he idolized me, so wildly indeed, that this bitter disappointment hurled reason from her lofty throne, obscuring in darkness that mighty intellect, whose vivid powers of imagination had excited the admiration of the world.

"Hark! hark! listen to the frantic ravings of his distracted mind,—hear him as he wildly repeats the name of Mabel, entreating her with touching earnestness to turn that chilling glance away,—watch him closely in these paroxysms of insanity—then tell me if the love of such a man is valueless, if such true affection should be trampled upon?

"'Mabel, dear Mabel,' is his plaintive cry, when half unconsciously I softly murmur, 'Dear Ernest, I am here.' Wildly he gazed around the apartment, his dark eye burning with the fire of frenzy, until at last his maniac glance rested upon my trembling form, then, uttering one wild, piercing shriek, he fell senseless upon the floor. Springing to his side in speechless agony, I fondly bathed his pallid brow, my trembling hand tightly clasping his icy fingers, while tears of bitter anguish gushed from my eyes, moistening the dark curls which clustered upon his noble head. As I tenderly bent over his inanimate form, the snowy eyelids gradually unclosed, revealing a pair of brilliant orbs, whose restless glance quickly changed to a look of glad surprise, when met by the tearful gaze with which I silently regarded his recovery.

"Faintly he breathed my name, 'Mabel, dear Mabel,' his cold hand softly pressing mine own, expressing by that simple act more love than language could express. Thank God! the galling chains which fettered his soaring spirit at last are burst asunder, the light of heaven once more illumines that benighted mind, the clouds which have so long obscured in darkness that aspiring intellect have faded into mist, and again does his eagle eye flash with the fire of genius. As I gently pressed my lips to his pale forehead a sweet smile stole like sunlight over his countenance, while playfully he twined his arms around my slender waist, clasping me closely to his manly form.

"'O, Mabel,' exclaimed he, earnestly, 'I have had a fearful dream, to-night. Methought that your soft eyes looked coldly into mine, their freezing glance chilling my very heart,—that your ruby lips curled scornfully as you haughtily listened to the tale of love I breathed within your ear.'

"Disengaging myself from his ardent embrace, I flung my trembling form at his feet, while with pale lips and a faltering tongue, I breathed to him the fatal, agonizing truth. When I had finished the narration of these strange, mysterious events, he gently raised me from my kneeling posture, and softly murmured ardent words of forgiveness and love.

"Suddenly raising my eyes, I beheld the face of my mysterious guide, she too having rendered herself again visible. With a smile of angelic sweetness she laid my hand within the warm palm of Ernest, while in her thrilling tones she thus addressed me for the last time:

"'Mabel, we must now part,—my heavenly mission has been faithfully fulfilled. Farewell.'

"Ere I could reply to these parting words, I was awakened from this fearful, foreboding dream by your sudden entrance.'

A shade of sadness quickly passed over the fair brow of her lovely listener, who inquired:

"Mabel, dearest, did you really love Ernest Beverly, or is it all imagination's fairy work? But, do you recollect Eva Mortimer, that laughter-loving sprite. Well, Mabel, dearest, Ernest has consoled himself with the sweet smile of Eva. They twain are one."

With a wild shriek Mabel fell senseless at the feet of her frightened companion. Medical aid was quickly summoned, too late, alas! to restore the fair girl to her weeping friends. At the hour of midnight had those terrible words chilled the warm life blood of her heart, and when the sun's rays stole through the lattice at dawn, they fell on Mabel's pale face and shrouded form, who but one brief day before, was the picture of joyous health. Mabel Stanwood was dead.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

HAPPINESS.

BY TAMAR ANNE KEMBOIS.

Is it found 'neath the sunny Italian skies,
Or in beautiful fairy-like delia?
Where the air is all scented with sweet perfumes,
That enchant and bewitch with their spells?
It is not there.

Is it found in the homes of the rich and great—
Where fashion holds iron sway?
Where music is heard, and sweet faces seen,
From which sorrow and care flee away?
It is not there.

Is it found on the ocean's yielding flood,
When its bosom is calm and serene?
And the vessel glides nobly, proudly on,
Like a beautiful, stately queen?
It is not there.

Is it found in the peasant's lowly cot,
Where industry and care reside?
Far, far from the busy, deceitful whirl
Of ambition's foaming tide?
It is not there.

You may seek it in vain, the wide world o'er,
Search each mansion and lowly cot;
It will fly from your grasp, yet you'll hope to find
The sunny and favored spot.
But it is not here.

'Tis a blossom that blooms beyond the sky—
In a region pure and fair;
'Tis in heaven it opens its petals bright—
You must look for it, darling, there.
You will find it there.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

THE FORGE AND THE EASEL.

BY HARRIET A. DAVISON.

At Antwerp, many years ago,—so many, that the precise date has almost slipped from my memory, though I believe it was in 1460,—there lived an old man, an artist of only mediocre talent and skill, but who worked perseveringly on, day by day, hoping some day to become of equal fame with Verocchio, Cimabue, or Leonardo da Vinci; but as he never did, his name passed from the memory of his people, and were it not for his lovely daughter, I should allow it to remain lost in the lapse of ages. He was called Herman Rauch, and lived in a retired street of Antwerp, happy with his gentle *frau*, his daughter and his art. Ilda Rauch was beautiful as a poet's dream; light brown hair and soft blue eyes. She was admired and loved by all, far and near, and especially by one Quentyn Matsys, who lived not far from the house of Herman Rauch. Quentyn was a blacksmith of more than common intelligence and industry. Early and late he could be seen toiling at the forge; and he was never in want of a job, for he was as expert and quick at mending any nice little article as any jeweller. Day after day Ilda and Quentyn met, and the feeling between them had ripened into a strong attachment.

Finally, unable to conceal his love any longer, he sought an interview with old Herman. He found the old man in his studio bending before his picture, as usual. Old Herman looked up, as Quentyn entered; but perceiving who it was, resumed his painting with a sort of dissatisfied grunt. Quentyn stood for some moments, not knowing exactly how to begin, and hoping the old man would look up again and perhaps put some question to him; but, as he continued painting with a determined air, Quentyn approached nearer the old artist, and managed to stammer out:

"I have something I wish to say to you, sir."

"Yes, yes," uttered the old man, without turning his head, "I know all about it; my wife told me. The buckle was mended very well, very well, only rather clumsily."

"But I did not come to say anything about the buckle," said Quentyn, while the rich blood flushed to his forehead and mantled his cheek.

"Well, do say what you wish to, and then let me alone," testily returned old Rauch, pushing back his chair and turning upon the intruder a pale face, nearly as pleasant by the expression of fretfulness and ill-temper resting upon it.

"Your daughter—I mean I—" began Quentyn, unable, in his agitation, to frame any connected or intelligible sentence.

"If you don't know what you want to say, and can't make yourself understood, you must go away, and not return till you do," snapped Herman Rauch.

In desperation, Quentyn exclaimed:

"I know only too well what I want. I love your daughter Ilda, and it was to tell you so, and gain your consent to address her, that I came here."

"Love my daughter!" exclaimed the old man, springing from his chair, his face now positively repulsive, so bitter was the expression of rage and scorn depicted on it.

"Yes;" sturdily replied young Matsys, while his heart grew heavy.

"I never heard such insolence!" exclaimed Rauch, stamping his foot. "You, nothing but a blacksmith, love my daughter, and dare tell me of it? Me, the painter of that picture?" and he pointed to a canvass that stood against the wall, covered with representations of cabbages, wine-glasses, bottles, half cut lemons, and any number of other articles. "Get out of my sight. None but an artist, a true master of art, deserves or shall possess the hand of my Ilda. Go," he said, cooling down somewhat, and speaking in a softer tone, for he was not a cruel or bitter man, and felt really pained at the sad expression on Quentyn's face, "and return only when you have become an artist."

"But I have no talent for painting, no genius; my efforts would be all in vain!" urged poor Quentyn.

"You have my only answer. None but a good artist shall marry my daughter. Become one, and my consent is freely given;" and Herman motioned young Matsys to leave, and resumed his painting.

Quentyn left softly, closing the door, and as softly descending the stairs. The stairway was so dark that Quentyn had almost passed Ilda, where she stood, without knowing it, had not a soft voice gently spoken his name. One instant, and he clasped Ilda in his arms and kissed her.

"All hope is gone, dear Ilda, and I may not stay here. Your father will only permit you to marry an artist. Farewell!" and he had gone before she could recover herself enough to call him back.

Ilda had waited for the end of the interview, that she might know what her father had answered, hoping, yet fearing, and at times almost tempted to rush up and add her entreaties to those of Quentyn, because she heard her father's voice speaking in angry tones. All the rest of the day, Quentyn Matsys stood beside his forge, with a smile and gay word for all his customers, but a weight laying heavy on his heart; and if at times he wished the iron he was beating was old Rauch, who can blame him? The last customer had gone, and closing his shop, he seated himself upon a stool. For a long time he remained with his head bowed upon his hands; at last, raising himself, he stretched out a handsome, muscular arm, and gazed at it with a sort of pity as he said:

"How can I, with that strong arm and ungraceful hand, ever hope to be an artist?"

"By perseverance, all succeed," murmured a soft voice, and Ilda Rauch stood beside him.

Quentyn's face lighted up with a glad smile, and he turned quickly, with the exclamation:

"You here, dear Ilda?"

"Yes, Quentyn. I came to hear the particulars of your interview with my father, and see what can be done. You hurried away so, this morning, that I had no time to ask any questions. Tell me now;" and Ilda drew another stool beside that of Quentyn's, and calmly seated herself upon it. There sat those two young people, side by side, with the decaying light of the forge shining upon them, giving the golden locks of Ilda a brighter, ruddier glow, and turning to drops of gold the tears which coursed themselves down her cheeks as she listened to her lover, who, in a sad, almost despairing voice, recounted what had passed between her father and himself. When he had finished, a long silence ensued, broken only by the sort of subdued roar of the fire. Suddenly, Ilda turned to Quentyn. "Dear Quentyn, we none of us know of what we are capable, until we have been tried. You must make an effort and see what can be done."

"Ilda," sadly replied the young man, "I know your father well. He will not alter his determination for all the prayers and entreaties we can bring him."

A slight blush flitted across the girl's face, and shaking her head, she answered:

"You did not understand me, Quentyn. I did not mean that you should petition my father again," and there was something of pride in her voice and eyes as she said so, "but that you should try and be an artist."

"I become an artist!" exclaimed Quentyn. "Why, look at these rough fingers and ungainly hands."

Ilda laughed softly, but said earnestly:

"You can but make the trial. We shall be no more unhappy, if you fail; and if you succeed—"

"I will try and I *will* succeed," said Quentyn; and his face glowed with a new hope.

In a small, dim attic, at early dawn, could be seen a young man bending before an easel, and by his side a young, fair haired, blue eyed girl sat sewing diligently, over and anon raising her head, to give her companion some word of advice or encouragement, and oftentimes lightening his labor by a song. Days, weeks, months and years rolled by, but still, at early morning, could be seen the two sitting side by side. One morning the pair were missed. The little dim attic was deserted. No laugh or blithesome song filled the apartment; all was hushed and still, and in the middle of the room stood the deserted easel, covered with a dark curtain, as with a pall. Ilda one day entered her father's studio, armed with his cloak and hat, and in a very little while she and her father might have been seen wending their way through the streets. Ilda led the way to an old house, up three pairs of creaking stairs, to a little low door. A gentle knock being answered by an invitation to enter, they found themselves in the little attic. Ilda advanced, and said to the young man, as a stranger:

"I have brought my father to see your picture."

The young artist came forward, and respectfully saluted the old man; then leading the way to the easel, he placed his hand upon the curtain, saying, as he did so:

"I am but an amateur, and I trust, sir, you will deal gently with me, though you will be acting the part of a friend, if you will point out my defects."

Pausing no longer, he drew aside the folds of the curtain, disclosing to the expectant eyes of old Rauch a female figure, nearly life size. The richness of coloring and faultless drawing astonished the beholder, and with his eyes full of tears, Herman Rauch turned to the young artist.

"Who are you? Your name?" he eagerly asked.

"Have I won her?" asked the artist, leading Ilda forward, and throwing aside his disguise, he stood before old Rauch, Quentyn Matsys. The old man was delighted; and when we say a marriage took place, not long afterwards, my readers will not be surprised. Shortly after Ilda and Quentyn were united the old man died, happy that his wish was attained and his daughter had married an artist. Could he have lived long enough to behold one of his loved Quentyn's pictures, the "Descent from the Cross," gracing, as it does now, one of the walls of the cathedral at Antwerp, his joy would have been perfect. Ilda and Quentyn lived long, happy years together, and never, for one moment, did Quentyn regret the answer of old Herman Rauch, which caused him to leave the forge for the easel.

A wealthy doctor who can help a poor man, and will not without a fee, has less sense of humanity than a poor ruffian, who kills a rich man to supply his necessities.—*Steele.*

MARRIED MEN.

BY THE OLD 'UN.

A pleasant and popular French writer, in a little *brochure*, published a few years since, amused himself with some of the follies, inconsistencies, and annoyances of married men, and sketches, with a lively pen, portraits of some specimens of the married man, presenting traits that are universally, and not merely locally true. He passes very rapidly over the evanescent endearments and enjoyments of the honeymoon, and thus paints the male individual, when he has passed from the ardor of the bridegroom to the indifference of the husband. When the lady exhibits herself before him with a new cap or bonnet, saying:

"How do I look? Does this become me?"

The husband replies—"Very well—charming—delightful," without raising his eyes from his newspaper.

The lady, perceiving that her husband has not even looked at her, retires in a pique.

When the gentleman accompanies his wife to a party, he deposits her in a corner of the room, where she may amuse herself as well as she can, while he pays his court to some other lady, or perhaps to several other ladies, provided they be young and handsome. The essential point of attraction in the object of attention is, that she is not his wife. If he dances, it is never with his wife, as that would be in excessively bad taste. Afterwards, he sits down to whist with some fascinating partner, and the minutes glide rapidly and noiselessly away. He enjoys himself without a thought that his wife may not perhaps be as agreeably employed. The latter approaches the card-table, and says, in a low tone:

"My dear, isn't it time for us to think about retiring?"

"Yes—yes—in a minute. (Diamonds trumps again!) Go and dance a little, and then we'll go."

"I don't want to dance—I'm tired."

"Then go sit down and rest yourself."

The lady is silent, but retires. At the end of half an hour she returns, and though she finds her husband deep in the mysteries of pasteboard and counters, she says:

"My dear, it is very late! Are you ready?"

"Yes, yes, in five minutes—not more than five minutes—I shall be at your service."

These five minutes last a good hour longer; and then our married man flings down his cards in a pet, and rises from the table, muttering:

"What a bore not to be able to do what you like. To have somebody always at your shoulder, who forces you to go when you want to stay. Women haven't the slightest spark of gentlemanly feeling. Ah! when I was a bachelor, I had my way. What fools we are to tie ourselves up so. Come now."

And the gentleman offers his arm and retires with his lady. In the street she asks:

"Shan't we take a carriage?"

He answers: "A carriage! nonsense! it's only a step. Besides, it will do you good to walk. Come along."

THE MARRIED MAN WALKING WITH HIS CHILDREN.

Behold this gentleman, whose decent and civic exterior does not announce the slightest shade of foppishness. His dress would be exceedingly neat, if his children were not in the habit of wiping their hands upon his coat and pantaloons. But as his clothes are almost always permeated with candy, honey, raisins and molasses, it may easily be imagined that to preserve an air of cleanliness and neatness is a matter of great difficulty.

Often has this gentleman some portion of his dress torn; he is not unfrequently *minus* several buttons, and the indentations of his hat are apt to render it a shocking bad one. All this is the result of the thoughtlessness of his innocent pledges, and yet the good man is hourly singing:

"Ah! qu'on est heureux d'etre pere!"

This gentleman has two sons, the eldest a boy of six, and the second in his fourth year. This gentleman, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, is at the beck and call of his little boys. Their mother will not have Dodolphe and Polyte crossed in anything—assuming that constant deference to the will of children is the only method of forming their characters; the father is too good to contradict, and the result is complete obedience to his puppets, and an incessant solicitude for orders.

When Dodolphe and Polyte express a desire to take a walk, our good man hurries to put on his overcoat, takes his hat, and behold him setting forth with his sons. The tender mother, putting her head over the bannisters, calls out: "Keep a sharp lookout for the carriages. Don't make them walk too fast! Don't let them step in the gutter! If they tear their clothes, I shall hold you accountable for it;"—all the directions suitable for a nursery maid, and to all of which the gentleman has replied, with a submissive air:

"Make yourself easy, my dear; I shan't leave them a minute; I shall be very watchful; don't worry yourself."

The gentleman moves in the direction of the Boulevards, holding Polyte with one hand, and Dodolphe with the other.

At first, the promenade commences peaceably enough; the children, satisfied with going out, content themselves with looking round and forcing their father to stop before every shop, which the latter does with admirable docility.

But, on reaching the Boulevard du Temple, Dodolphe wishes to go directly to the wax figures, while Polyte is as firmly bent on visiting the Chateau-d'Eau. A furious dispute arises, and the good father is pulled hither and thither, to the imminent danger of the integrity of his garments, to say nothing of the peril of his sacred person. At length, with a gigantic effort, he says:

"Ah! *Gordens*, my little man, if you don't stop, I shall run away and leave you both—*fichtre!* and then the guard will come and take you—*fichtre!* and you'll be taken up as a naughty boy, and then—*fichtre!*"

This menace is successful. The children are silent for a moment. Delighted at having secured obedience, our good man bears them off with a certain air of pride, looking round him to enjoy the effect he supposes it has produced upon the passers by.

At last, they reach Punch's booth, and here, with great unanimity of sentiment, the two children insist on witnessing the show, and compel their father to mount them on his shoulders, that they may command a view of the stage.

"Papa, who is that ugly man that is shaking his head, and wants to fight with Punch?"

"My son, that's the constable."

"Look there! he has two great horns on his head and a great red tail."

"If he has a red tail, it is not the constable, it is Old Nick, my children."

"Papa, why does Old Nick want to beat Punch?"

"Probably, my dear, because Punch has been naughty, because he has refused to eat his bread, and was unwilling to learn the fable of the Fox and the Crow by heart."

"Papa, does Old Nick teach Punch fables? Is he his schoolmaster?"

"My dear Dodolphe, Old Nick is certainly not a schoolmaster. It would certainly be wrong for you to attribute to him functions which—functions I say that—functions—" Here, getting essentially *stuck*, he supplies the hiatus by a fit of coughing, and then adds: "But from all times he has intervened (*intervenit*) to punish naughty folks and idlers—this is what I wanted to explain to you just now, by employing a metaphorical figure. Ahem!"

"Papa, who is this great man with a black gown who comes when Old Nick goes away, and quarrels so with Punch?"

"O, now, my son, this *is* the constable!"

"What is a constable, papa?"

"My son, he is a man entrusted with the establishment of peace and order."

"Then why does he quarrel and fight with Punch?"

"My son, probably Punch has refused to pay his taxes, or has set flower pots on his window-seat, in contravention of the city ordinance."

"Ah! now Punch is killed by the constable."

"That, my son, is a proof of divine justice, which wills that, sooner or later, the wicked shall receive the chastisement due to their iniquities."

"No, Punch gets up again; he kills the constable!"

"Probably because the constable had two sets of weights and measures, and Providence wishes to punish him by means of Punch."

"Papa! papa! the constable is not killed—he picks up his stick again, and kills Punch."

"Then, my son, Punch is decidedly a rascal, and has got into trouble with some police officer."

"Papa! papa! Punch isn't dead; he takes the stick and kills the constable. My eyes! how he puts the licks in!"

The father, overwhelmed by the difficulties of explaining the moral of the piece played by the puppets, abandons the task in despair, and leaves the riddle unsolved. They take up their homeward march, during which some serious disasters follow. Dodolphe receives a black eye from a *gamin*, who escapes in the crowd, and Polyte is attacked in the rear by an unpleasant dog, and suffers an unseemly loss of broadcloth. The father at length reaches home in a most unhappy frame of mind, and a state of complete physical exhaustion, to encounter the violent reproaches of his better half, on the score of infidelity to his trust, as evinced in the carnage done to their garments and their faces.

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THE DYING CHILD'S PRAYER.

BY FANNY BELL.

Bury me where birds are singing,
Where the flowers are growing wild;
And the sweetest notes are ringing
On the air so soft and mild.

Where my sisters and my brothers
Soon will wander to the spot,
And around my grave, with others,
Plant the sweet forget-me-not.

Where those too, who now are nearest
Oft will go, but not to weep;
Always this, remember, dearest,
"That I am not dead, but sleep."

That my spirit hovers near thee,
Watching thee with heavenly love;
In the breeze I'll whisper, "hear me,
I am waiting thee above."

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

THE MENDED TUREEN-HANDLE.

BY MRS. CAROLINE ORNE.

"WHAT shall I do, Mira?" said Anne Brimfield to her cousin. "I have broken off one of the handles of that large and beautiful tureen, that belongs to our new dining-set."

"How did you do it, Anne?"

"I was looking for something in the china closet, and accidentally threw down a silver goblet, which fell directly on the tureen-handle. You know how vexed mother will be."

"She will oblige you to replace it, I suppose."

"Yes, and then I shall have to go without that elegant bracelet I've set my heart on."

"Cannot you replace the tureen out of your quarterly allowance of spending-money?"

"No, for I've spent every shilling of it for laces and embroidery, and should have been glad to spend four times as much, if I'd had it."

"If you only had some patent cement, such as a pedler tried to sell to mother, a few days before I left home, you could mend the tureen, and it would be as good as new."

"We've plenty of it. Mother bought some, about a week ago, of the very pedler, perhaps, that called at your house."

"Well, if the man told the truth, china or glass ware will break sooner in any other place, than where it is mended with the cement; though he said it would take a week, or ten days, to dry and harden after it was used for that purpose."

"Without doubt, there will be plenty of time for that, as we seldom have occasion to use so large a tureen."

Anne, after some trouble—for she did not like to inquire for it—hunted up the patent cement, and she and Mira, closely following the printed directions, succeeded in replacing the handle of the tureen so neatly, that the fracture, without close inspection, would not have been noticed. It was then restored to its usual place, and Anne, that very day, purchased the coveted bracelet.

"May I go home for an hour, Mrs. Brimfield?" said Bessie Lyle, a girl of fourteen. who had lived with the lady addressed about four weeks, and who answered the bell, waited on the table, washed dishes and scoured knives, besides numerous other things which the cook, Mrs. Brimfield, or Anne, always had ready for her to do. "I've done up all the work," said Bessie, seeing that Mrs. Brimfield hesitated.

"There is half a dozen coarse towels I wish you to hem this afternoon."

"If you will please let me go, I will take the towels with me. I shouldn't care so much about going, only my brother is unwell, and sent word that he wanted me to come and stay with him, while mother went to carry home some work she has been doing."

"If you'll mind and not idle away your time, and be sure to finish the towels, you may go; but remember that, for the future, you are to go and see your mother only once in two weeks. I've plenty of sewing for you to do, and cannot spare you."

Having obtained Mrs. Brimfield's reluctant consent, Bessie was soon on her way to her mother's.

"O, here's Bessie, at last," said Mrs. Lyle, as her daughter softly opened the door, and smilingly peeped into the room. "It was so late, that I had almost given you up."

"Mother had, but I hadn't," said Edwin, a handsome boy of twelve, with large, lustrous eyes, and brown wavy hair shading his forehead.

"Are you better, Edwin, than when I was here last week?" asked Bessie.

"O, yes, a great deal better. I've no fever now, and in another week, I hope to be able to go out doors."

"And you, Bessie," said her mother, "does the pain in your side trouble you, now that you have more exercise?"

"Not often—never, except Mrs. Brimfield, or Anne, has so much sewing for me to do of an afternoon, that I'm obliged to hurry. How much pleasanter it is here, than at Mrs. Brimfield's," said she, as she seated herself at a window, and commenced unrolling her work.

"We were afraid that it would appear dull and gloomy to you," said Mrs. Lyle, "after being accustomed to large, airy rooms, handsomely furnished."

"Pleasant words and pleasant looks are so much better than large rooms and grand furniture," said Bessie. "I don't say this because Mrs. Brimfield and Miss Anne don't treat me well; but then you know that, though I am thought to be of considerable consequence here at home, I am none there, except for what I can do."

"If you are not, I don't believe that Anne Brimfield is half as pretty, or half as good as you are," said Edwin, somewhat indignantly.

"It was four weeks yesterday, since you went to live at Mrs. Brimfield's," said Mrs. Lyle.

"Yes, which at four and sixpence a week, makes just three dollars. I shall earn enough for Edwin's new suit of clothes, by the time Mr. Richards wants him."

"If I hadn't been sick, I should have found some way to earn them myself. But it wont do for me to go into a bookstore with these," said Edwin, as he looked at his much worn and much mended clothes. "When I've been with Mr. Richards a year, if I please him, he is to give me enough, besides my board, to buy my clothes, and more too; and then, Bessie, it will be my turn to give something to you. I wish that living at Mrs. Brimfield's was as pleasant as being in a bookstore, for stormy days, you know, there wont be much custom, and then I shall find a good deal of time to read."

"I regret that I am obliged to carry this work home," said Mrs. Lyle, "it is such a treat to have you here, Bessie; but I must return this and try to get some more."

"Don't be gone longer than you can help, mother," said Bessie, "for I must go, the moment I've finished hemming these towels. The next time I come, I hope I shall be able to take a few stitches for you."

Bessie was hemming her last towel when her mother returned, who had been detained longer than she had expected.

"I am sorry," said Mrs. Lyle, "that you are not able to stop long enough to take a cup of tea with us, and cat a slice or two of the nice loaf of bread, which I baked on purpose because we expected you. And Edwin—he has thought so much about it."

"You know, Bessie," said he, with an attempt to smile, "that it appeared to me, that the tea and the bread would taste better, if you were sitting in your old place at the table."

"I wish I could stay. Perhaps, in a few months, I shall be able to return home, and help mother sew, as I used to, and then you can come every Sunday, and take tea with us."

The leave-taking was rendered cheerful by this little pleasant, domestic picture, and Bessie's heart was full of courage, as, tripping lightly along the sidewalk, she looked forward to its realization. She was at Mrs. Brimfield's before she thought of it.

A few minutes previously to her arrival, Mrs. Brimfield had received a hastily written note from her cousin, Mrs. Hatton, who resided in New York city, saying that Mr. Hatton and herself, and several distinguished guests from the South, were going to visit Niagara Falls, and other celebrated places, and should make it in their way to call and dine with her the next Thursday, and probably spend the night.

"And to-day is Tuesday, with only two hours to sunset," said Mrs. Brimfield, after reading the note to her daughter and Mira Archer.

"Well, aunt," said Mira, "you always have everything in such perfect order, that a day's notice is as good as a week's."

"That is no excuse for Mrs. Hatton. It would, I dare say, have been quite as convenient for her to let me know a few days sooner. It is fortunate that I concluded to purchase that elegant dining-set, for, though I don't care particularly for the Hattons, stylish as they are, those distinguished guests, she speaks of, are quite a different affair."

Anne and Mira exchanged glances, when Mrs. Brimfield mentioned the dining-set, but remained silent. Soon afterward, she left the room, and then Anne asked Mira what she thought about the tureen-handle.

"I am afraid that the cement wont be sufficiently hardened, by Thursday, to make it safe to use the tureen," was her answer. "I advise you to tell your mother that you broke it."

"I haven't the courage to tell her. You don't know, as well as I do, how angry it will make her. And then she always remembers anything of the kind for so long a time. I shouldn't wonder if she put me on bread and water for a month, besides making me pay for the tureen. Come, Mira, let us go up and examine it. I don't believe but that the cement will harden as well in two days as it ever will."

"We can judge better to-morrow," replied Mira. "It is now only a few hours since it was mended."

The examination was therefore deferred, and Anne, in examining her dresses, and deciding which would be the most becoming, forgot her vexation about the broken tureen.

Mrs. Brimfield, before she slept, had decided exactly what to have for dinner on Thursday, and she felt well pleased, when, in imagination, she contemplated the result.

Mr. and Mrs. Hatton, with their southern friends, alluded to in the note, arrived at the time anticipated. These friends were a gentleman and his wife by the name of Egerton, and their son, Granville Egerton, a young man of twenty-five. The younger Egerton was singularly handsome, and his manners being pleasing and unaffected, he was a favorite among his acquaintances, and seldom failed to produce a favorable impression on strangers. This was decidedly the case, as respected Anne Brimfield and Mira Archer. With so much that was pleasant to engage their attention, the broken tureen-handle was entirely forgotten.

Poor Bessie Lyle was, in the mean time, doing her best to perform the many different things required of her in an acceptable manner. Minda, the cook, who was proud of her culinary skill, had received so many charges from Mrs. Brimfield to mind and have everything uncommonly nice, that she was constantly haunted with fears of failure, which, by degrees, wrought her up to such a state of feverish excitement, as to cause her to be exceedingly cross and irritable. This was the case, more particularly, when the soup was approaching its culminating point, which any one, less deeply skilled in the mysteries of gastronomic lore than Minda, would have found it impossible to decide. Her calls on Bessie for just the least sprinkling of salt, a single shake of the pepper-box, or a sprig of some sweet herb, uttered almost in the same breath, with directions to stir up the fire, put more water into the boiler, mash the turnips, butter the peas, and mix some fresh mustard, were made in a voice which showed that she was every moment becoming more and more exasperated with her "waiter," as she called Bessie, and that for no fault, except her inability to do two or three things at the same time. Minda's face was already as red as a peony, and Bessie's cheeks were fast deepening to that decided hue, when the soup was declared to have the "right relish exactly."

The cook being now at liberty to direct her attention to other things, the dinner, with a little extra exertion, was ready to be served at the exact moment. The large tureen was filled with the delicious soup, which Minda had lost her temper in preparing, and Bessie, with every nerve strained in her little hands and wrists, carried it to the dining-room; but just before she reached the table, the cement having become softened by the heat of the almost boiling soup, the handle suddenly gave way, and the contents of the tureen, except what fell on one of Bessie's feet, were emptied on the carpet. In her fright, which was so great that she did not know her foot was scalded, she uttered a suppressed cry, though loud enough to bring the ever watchful and careful Mrs. Brimfield to the dining-room. So great was her wrath, when she saw the soup standing in a pool on her beautiful carpet, from which numerous little streamlets were making their way in various directions, that, without listening to Bessie's attempted explanation, she gave her a heavy blow on one side of her head, giving her to understand, at the same time, that she should keep back her wages to pay for the tureen.

Mrs. Hatton, who also heard Bessie's cry, when the tureen so suddenly parted from the handle, claiming the privilege of relationship, followed Mrs. Brimfield to the dining-room. Anne and Mira also heard it, and at once divined the cause. Anne turned pale, and requesting Mira to accompany her, left the room. With trembling steps they approached the dining-room, and looked in. Bessie had sunk down on the carpet, with her face buried in her lap, for her foot began to be so painful that she could not stand.

"Anne," said Mira, "you mustn't let that poor girl bear the blame of this. Confess that you broke the handle off of the tureen, and I will confess that I was so foolish as to advise you to attempt to mend it."

"I cannot—I haven't the courage."

"And I haven't the courage to let poor Bessie Lyle bear the blame of what she isn't guilty of. I will explain to your mother how it all happened."

"No, no, wait a minute. Give me a little time to think."

Mrs. Brimfield, who had been engaged in directing the attention of Mrs. Hatton to the girl's insufferable carelessness, as she termed it, looking round at this moment, and seeing Bessie sitting on the carpet, sharply ordered her to go to the kitchen. Bessie rose, but the pain of her scalded foot was so severe as to cause a faint, sickening sensation, and she caught hold of a chair to prevent falling.

"Do you understand?" said Mrs. Brimfield. "I told you to go to the kitchen."

"The child is faint—see how pale she is," said Mrs. Hatton.

"My foot is scalded, and it pains me so bad," said Bessie.

Mira sprang forward to the spot where Bessie stood.

"Let me assist you to go to my room," said she, "it is so much nearer than yours;" but the first step she took so increased the pain, that she came near fainting. It was found to be impossible for her to walk.

Mrs. Hatton slipped from the room, but soon returned, accompanied by her husband, and followed by the Egertons, who imagined that Anne Brimfield, whom they saw turn pale, and hastily leave the room, was seriously ill.

"This girl," said Mrs. Hatton, addressing her husband, "has scalded her foot so badly, that she is unable to walk, and we need your assistance to carry her to some more retired place, where it can be attended to."

"I should think it much better to call Minda, than to trouble Mr. Hatton," said Mrs. Brimfield.

Mr. Hatton assured her that it was no trouble, and lifting the slight form of Bessie in his arms, he followed Mira, who led the way, to the room which had been appropriated to her use, during her visit. She was placed on a lounge, and though Mrs. Hatton and Mira removed the stocking with the utmost care, one side of the foot, where the scalding fluid found space to enter the shoe, as well as a part of the ankle, were completely excoriated.

"O, this is frightful!" said Mrs. Hatton; "but I have some skill, acquired by a sad case in my own family, and with your assistance, Mira, we will try and make the girl more comfortable."

They succeeded admirably, Anne having made herself useful in procuring bandages. She was, however, soon obliged to leave them, being sent for by her mother.

"You feel easier now, do you not?" said Mrs. Hatton.

"A great deal, thank you; but it isn't the pain that I care most about. My brother will have to go without his new clothes now, and he wont be fit to go into Mr. Richards's bookstore."

"Why," inquired Mrs. Hatton, "will he have to go without them?"

"Because he has been sick with a fever and couldn't earn them himself, and I was to let him have my wages to buy them with. In two more weeks, mother thought there would be enough, but now all must go to pay for the broken tureen."

Mira was almost tempted to tell all she knew about it, but was prevented by the earnestness with which Anne begged her to wait, and by thinking it might be better for the explanation to be made privately to Mrs. Brimfield, whose sense of justice would, no doubt, impel her to do what was right. While these thoughts were passing through Mira's mind, Mrs. Hatton inquired of Bessie what made her think that she should have to pay for the broken tureen.

Mrs. Brimfield told me that she should keep back my wages to pay for it," Bessie replied.

"She thinks it no more than just," said Mrs. Hatton. "There are probably many who would be of that opinion. Your brother, however, is not to blame, and I will see that he does not lose his chance in the bookstore for want of suitable clothing."

"I didn't think that there was any such kind lady in the world," said Bessie; and as she spoke, tears came to her eyes. "It seems strange," said she, "that I should cry at what makes me so glad."

They now, at Bessie's earnest request, went down to dinner.

"How is your patient?" inquired Mrs. Egerton, as they entered the dining-room.

"Much easier," said Mrs. Hatton, "and so grateful for our attention, that I begin to think that Miss Archer and I must have really manifested an uncommon degree of beneficence."

"I shall by no means allow that you have," said Mrs. Egerton. "That sweet, mournful face of her's is enough to excite any one's kindness and sympathy. I felt strangely attracted towards her, the moment I saw her."

"That, I suspect," said Mr. Egerton, "was because she so strikingly resembles your old friend, Fanny Inman."

"Then you noticed the resemblance?"

"Yes, the moment I saw her."

"Fanny Inman, did you say, sir?" inquired Mira.

"Yes."

"That," said Mira, "is a name I saw marked on the corner of a pocket handkerchief I saw Bessie have the other day."

"Who knows but that you will find in this pretty, unfortunate Bessie, the daughter of your early friend?" said Mr. Egerton, addressing his wife.

"I hope that it may prove so," she replied. "I believe, Mrs. Brimfield, that you told me that the girl's name is Bessie Lyle?"

"I did," was Mrs. Brimfield's answer, in a voice that showed the subject was not one that pleased her.

"I never could ascertain the name of Fanny's husband," said Mrs. Egerton. "She was not married till several years after we went South, and the epistolatory correspondence which, at first, was kept up very regularly between us, had for some time ceased, when I heard of her marriage."

A short time before they were ready to rise from the table, Anne, who during the whole of the time had sat silent and dejected, said to Mira, who sat next her:

"I wish you would explain how all this has happened. I intended to do it, but if you will undertake it, it will relieve me so much."

"You wish the explanation made to your mother—not now?"

"Yes, now. I've been thinking about it, and it don't appear to me to be right, for Bessie to be subjected to the imputation of carelessness for what was my fault. It might prove a serious injury to her, if she wished to get another place."

Mira, therefore, as briefly as possible, related the circumstance of Anne's breaking off the tureen-handle, not forgetting to mention that, at her own suggestion, it was mended with some patent cement. Mrs. Brimfield, during the whole time, looked very grave, and though Anne, in imagination, could see the new summer bonnet she had been looking at, and several other light and elegant articles, suitable for the season, all consolidated in a large soup-tureen, her spirits were so much lighter, now that the explanation was made, she could not but realize how much better it would be to wear a heavy bonnet, than to be burdened with a heavy heart.

"This fair and open acknowledgement, made on your own account, and your cousin's," said Mr. Egerton, when Mira had finished, "is, to my mind, worth more than a dozen tureens."

"My opinion, precisely," said Mr. Hatton, "as it is of us all, if looks, as well as words of approbation, may be admitted as testimony."

Mr. and Mrs. Egerton called on Mrs. Lyle, and, as they hoped and expected, found in her the friend of earlier days. Memories which long had slept were revived, and the moments passed unheeded by. When about to take leave, Mrs. Egerton handed something to Edwin, which had been given her for that purpose by Mrs. Hatton. On examination, it proved to be a gold eagle, and on the paper which enclosed it was written: "To purchase the clothes which Bessie is unable to earn."

Nothing was said by the Egertons, relative to pecuniary affairs, to Mrs. Lyle; but in about a week after their visit, she received, through the post-office, a handsome remittance, enclosed in a blank envelope.

At Mrs. Egerton's request, the correspondence between her and Mrs. Lyle had been renewed. As Mrs. Lyle had no doubt but that it was to her and Mr. Egerton that she was indebted for the generous gift, she took occasion to mention the subject in one of her letters, and to warmly thank them for the aid so delicately rendered. In her answer, Mrs. Egerton said that the gift so mysteriously received might prove to be fairy gold, and advised her not to let it lie by her too long, lest it should turn into withered leaves, or something equally worthless.

In four years, Mr. and Mrs. Egerton, with their aunt and his wife—he having for some time been married to Mira Archer—again visited their friends at the North. When they called on Mrs. Lyle, they found how much may be accomplished by a comparatively small sum, judiciously appropriated. No longer tasked beyond her strength, in her endeavors to keep absolute want from the door, she had, in appearance, grown younger, instead of older, during the four years since they last saw her. Bessie, who, without neglecting to assist her mother, had found time for mental cultivation, was one of the loveliest and most intelligent girls they had ever met; while Edwin, who had proved so capable and trust-worthy, that Mr. Richards had, some time since, constituted him his confidential clerk, still counted among his dearest enjoyments, those Sunday evenings spent with his mother and sister. Mrs. Brimfield is as stately and precise as ever, but Anne often finds refuge from the cold splendor of what she calls home, in the pleasant family of Mr. Hatton, and she is now preparing to go South, and to spend a few months with her cousin Mira.

Jester's Picnic.

"What brought you here?" said a lone woman, who was quite "frustrated," the other morning, by an early call from a bachelor neighbor, who lived opposite, and whom she regarded with peculiar favor, though she never dared to tell her love, but let concealment, like a worm in the bud, hide in the furrows of her wrinkled face and change her skin to parchment.

"I come to borrow matches."

"Matches! that's a likely story. Why don't you make a match yourself? I know what you come for," cried the exasperated old virgin, as she backed the bachelor into a corner. "You come here to kiss me almost to death! But you shan't, without you're the strongest, and the Lord knows you are!"

Old Deacon Havens, last harvest time, had a mowing bee, and among the party were two sons of Belial, who were more inclined to cut capers than clover. One trick consisted in filling the tin horn with soap, and then slightly stopping the orifice with cotton. When noon came, the deacon seized the instrument, and gave a blast which scattered the contents far and near. To say that he was displeased, would but slightly describe his feelings. He was enraged; for the first time in his life he swore! Says he: "Gentlemen, I am an old man—I am the head of the Sunday School, and have preached the gospel five-and-thirty years—but cuss me, if I can't lick any man who soft-soaped that trumpet!"

An Indian, having given a trader some annoyance, was told that in case he was seen again with a bottle, it would be taken from him and thrown into the fire. A few days after, the Indian appeared with his pint flask in his blanket, as usual, but the trader was as good as his word, and demanded the bottle, which the Indian gave up and started for the door. The trader threw the flask into the stove, and out came the windows, the trader following close behind. The next time that man burns a whiskey bottle, he will examine it, to see that it is not of "Dupont's" make.

Little boys, when they come late to school, have to bring a written excuse, explaining the cause of their tardiness. Some days since, an urchin, in a city school, came extremely late, but without the least fear or anxiety depicted on his countenance. He had a 'scuse. On handing it to the teacher, it was opened, and read thus: "Missus—*Whats the hare* for running away." The model 'scuse was accepted, and the little fellow was accordingly admonished in the region of his "sit down-upons."—*Courier.*

"Landlord, come here; I have got a secret that will make your fortune for you."

Landlord, joyously rubbing his hands—"No, what is it?"

"Do you see that goose at the head of the table?"

"Yes; what of it?"

"That is the very one which, by cackling, saved Rome. Come along, and I will show you where the centurion trod on her."

"Why is thirty-nine the number of lashes the Christian selects as the maximum for Christian flogging?" asked the Brahmin Poo Poo of Old Roger. Old Roger thought a moment. The question was a sarcastic one, and conveyed a severe reproof. "I suppose," said he, "it is to keep within the limit of human forty-tude." The Brahmin stroked his long beard, and the long tassel of his cap vibrated like a pendulum.

Virtues go fast after the individual ceases to be. There's Pumpsby was quite an invalid—of body before he collapsed into the coffin. Now his "eminent qualities of heart," his "disinterested and exhaustless patriotism," his "rare humanity and prudence," are the burden of his whole neighborhood. To bring the double-breasted virtues out, a man must first take himself out.

The Dutchman says that whoever wishes to get along in this world, has only to take a few lessons of a hen chasing a grasshopper. With a long neck and sharp eye, take a few hurried steps, stop short, peep over, peep under, now to the left, now to the right, one flutter and a rush, and then you have him. That's the way it is done.

A young beauty beheld one evening two horses running off at locomotive speed with a light wagon. As they approached, she was horrified at recognizing, in the vehicle, two gentlemen of her acquaintance. "Boys," she screamed in terror, "jump out—quick—especially George." It is needless to say that her sentiments as to "George" were from that time forth no secret.

A fellow was seen at a race course, with several soluble buildings in his hat.

"What's the matter, old fellow?" inquired a chap, whom he mistook for a post to lean against.

"Why—hic—the fact is my friends have been betting liquor—hic—'nd—'m holding the stakes."

Boileau D'Espreaux's reply to Louis Fourteenth, when he showed the poet some of his own royal versification, has never been excelled. He said: "Nothing, sire, is impossible to your majesty; you wished to make bad verse, and you have succeeded!"

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